TUITION + INTERVIEWS + REVIEWS + WORKSHOP + 12-STRING CORNER + LEGENDS

ACOUSTIC

www.acousticmagazine.com

The UK's only dedicated acoustic monthly. Only £4.95

A NEW AGE

RELIC'D & REBORN

IS THE ATKIN WHITE RICE THE ULTIMATE DREADNOUGHT?

ETHAN JOHNS
AND HIS RECKONING

GREGG ALLMAN
SOUL SURVIVOR

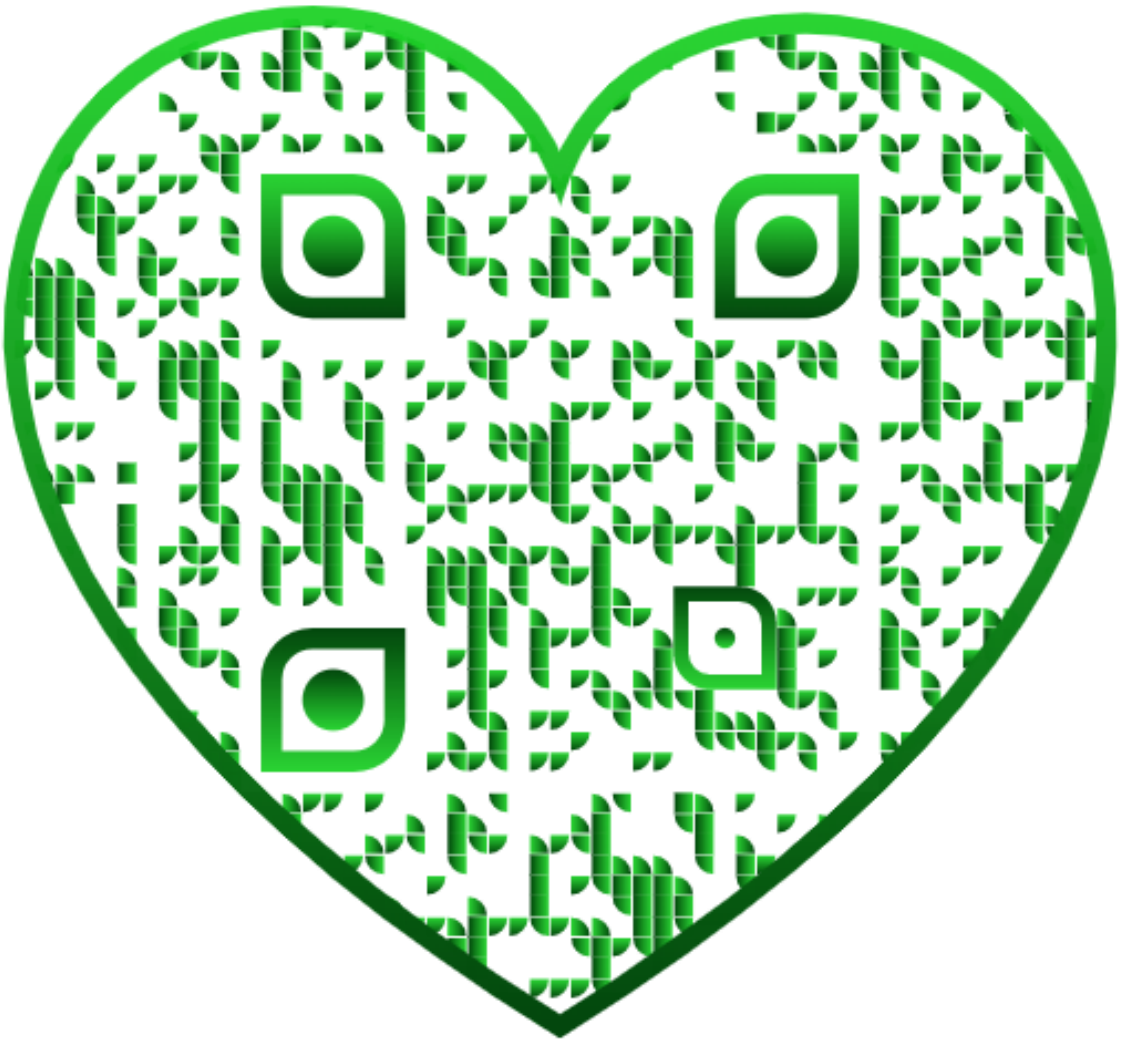
VANCE JOY
RIDING A RIPTIDE OF SUCCESS

RICH ROBINSON
BLACK CROWES MAN GOES SOLO

ISSUE 97 OCTOBER 2014 UK £4.95

9 771745 446040 10 >

GEAR ON TEST: ATKIN WHITE RICE, FAITH VENUS, VGS RT-100, GO PRO, BREEDLOVE CONCERT, ULTRASOUND CP-100



The Wee Lowden

Our smallest Lowden yet has a 610mm/24" scale length and hand carved voicing to bass bias for a surprisingly full acoustic tone.

Model shown features Indian Rosewood back and sides paired with a Redwood top, finished with 35 Series appointments. The Wee Lowden is available from selected Lowden retailers worldwide.

1974 - 2014

George Lowden celebrates 40 years of guitar building and designing

Handmade in Ireland

georgelowden.com

Lowden GUITARS

RESO
NATIONAL
PHONIC
BTM-GUITARS.DE
DAVEKING-ACOUSTICS.COM
DIEGITARRE.CH
FRAILERS.COM
MICHENAUD.COM
GUITARGUITAR.CO.UK
HOBGOBLIN.COM
PALMGUITARS.NL
CODA-MUSIC.COM
VINTAGEGITAR.NO
WILDERDAVOLI.IT
WUNJOGUITARS.COM
PEACHGUITARS.COM
GUITAR-VILLAGE.CO.UK
NATIONAL
MADE IN CALIFORNIA - NATIONALGUITARS.COM

THE PERFECT MATCH

Martin SP Lifespan strings are fitted to all new Martin guitars.Try the strings, try the guitar. Search for your local Martin stockist at www.quickfind.me/martin.

Martin & Co
EST. 1833

TO FIND A UK AUTHORISED MARTIN DEALER GO ONLINE TO:
QUICKFIND.ME/MARTIN

www.acousticmagazine.com
Issue 97 October 2014

Editor: Guy Little
Email: guy@blazepublishing.co.uk

Sub-Editor: Alex Ormiston

Design: Chris Sweeney
Advert Design: Katherine McArdle
Studio Gear Photography: Eckie
Cover Photography: Eckie

Columnists: Raymond Burley, Clive Carroll, Mike Dawes, Richard Gilewitz, Chris Gibbons, Gordon Giltrap, Daniel Ho, Leon Hunt, Thomas Leeb, David Mead, Matt Stevens, Chris Woods.

Writers: Paul Brett, Graham Hazelwood, Huw Hopkins, Andy Hughes, Leon Hunt, Guy Little, Alun Lower, Joel McIver, David Mead, Julian Piper, Teri Saccone, Nick Robbins, Paul Strange, Richard Thomas, Tom Christopher, Sam Wise.

Advertising Sales Manager: Florence Thornton-Weeks
Email: florencetw@blazepublishing.co.uk
Tel: 01926 339808

Published By: Blaze Publishing Ltd. Lawrence House, Morrell Street, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, CV32 5SZ

Distribution: Distributed to the news trade by Comag Magazine Marketing, West Drayton, Middlesex, UB7 7QE

Operations Director: James Folkard
Assistant Publisher: Ruth Burgess
Publisher: Wes Stanton
Accounts: Dave Deo
Marketing Manager: Sara Farmanfarmai
Subscription Rates: UK £71.40
For all subscription offers and overseas prices visit www.virtualnewsagent.com or telephone the subscriptions hotline on 01926 339808.

© Copyright – Blaze Publishing Ltd 2014.
Printed in the UK.
All Rights Reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form, stored in a retrieval system or integrated into any other publication, database or commercial program without the express permission of the publishers in writing. Under no circumstances should this publication and its contents be sold, loaned out or used by way of trade, or stored or transmitted as an electronic file without the publishers' prior approval.

Disclaimer:
While Blaze Publishing Ltd prides itself on the quality of the information its publications provide, the company reserves the right not to be held legally responsible for any mistakes or inaccuracies found within the text of this publication. *Acoustic* magazine is an independent publication and as such does not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of manufacturers or distributors of the products contained within. All trademarks are acknowledged.

***Acoustic* magazine is proud to support the Music Industries Association.**

A LITTLE WORD

I'll admit it: until recently, I've never been interested in instruments that have been subject to the relic ageing process. I've come across many Fender electric instruments that have been modified to represent a guitar that has gone through decades of wear and, to some extent, a lot of tear, but I've never "got it". Aged electric guitars really don't do it for me; "It's cheating," I hear you say. Well, my mind may have changed. I'm not talking about the Fender relic Stratocasters or whatnot, I'm talking acoustic guitars that have been subject to some form of ageing – which is still a relatively new idea for flat tops, despite Fender and Gibson producing relic electrics for some time now.

I've played many pre-war Martins, Gibsons older than I am – and I love them. Character, charm, glorious tone... So when Alister Atkin called me to talk about his White Rice guitars I was, at first, a little dubious about his artificially aged D-28, but my intrigue overtook any apprehensions I had. A relic'd acoustic guitar? Anyway, here's what the story is...

Alister is one of the UK's foremost guitar makers (check him out in *Acoustic Magazine Presents... The Book of British Guitar Making* along with the UK's other greatest luthiers), and he has recreated the White Rice D-28 in his Historic Series. It's a rebirth of Tony Rice's infamous D-28 guitar, previously owned by Clarence White – hence the name. The original D-28 was thought to be one of the best sounding D-28s in existence so Alister made another; or two, to be specific. He created a relic version that is near as dammit identical in its wear and tear to the original (more on how he achieved this in our interview with Alister), and the other a non-relic.

Okay, so I love the relic White Rice. I loved the "new" White Rice, too, but when they were sat side-by-side, I always picked up the relic first. Its character, although artificial, was more alluring than any guitars I've played in the last couple of months – and, I'll tell you what, it sounds the age it looks. I guess it's true – guitars do speak to you in different ways, and although I thought I'd not get on with a relic'd acoustic, I can't put the relic'd White Rice down. It's on my knee as I type this, in fact.

Our head-to-head test of the relic and the "new" White Rice yields some interesting conclusions. As well as reviewing the two guitars, we chat to Alister about how he does the relic process so tastefully. Anyway, naysayers beware – you'll come away from this issue coveting the relic White Rice like you wouldn't believe. Trust me.

Aside from Brazilian rosewood, or lack of, if this relic were to appear next to a pre-war C.F. Martin & Co. on the rack in a store, would you be able to tell the difference? I doubt it. Unless you're George Gruhn or Dick Boak, that is...

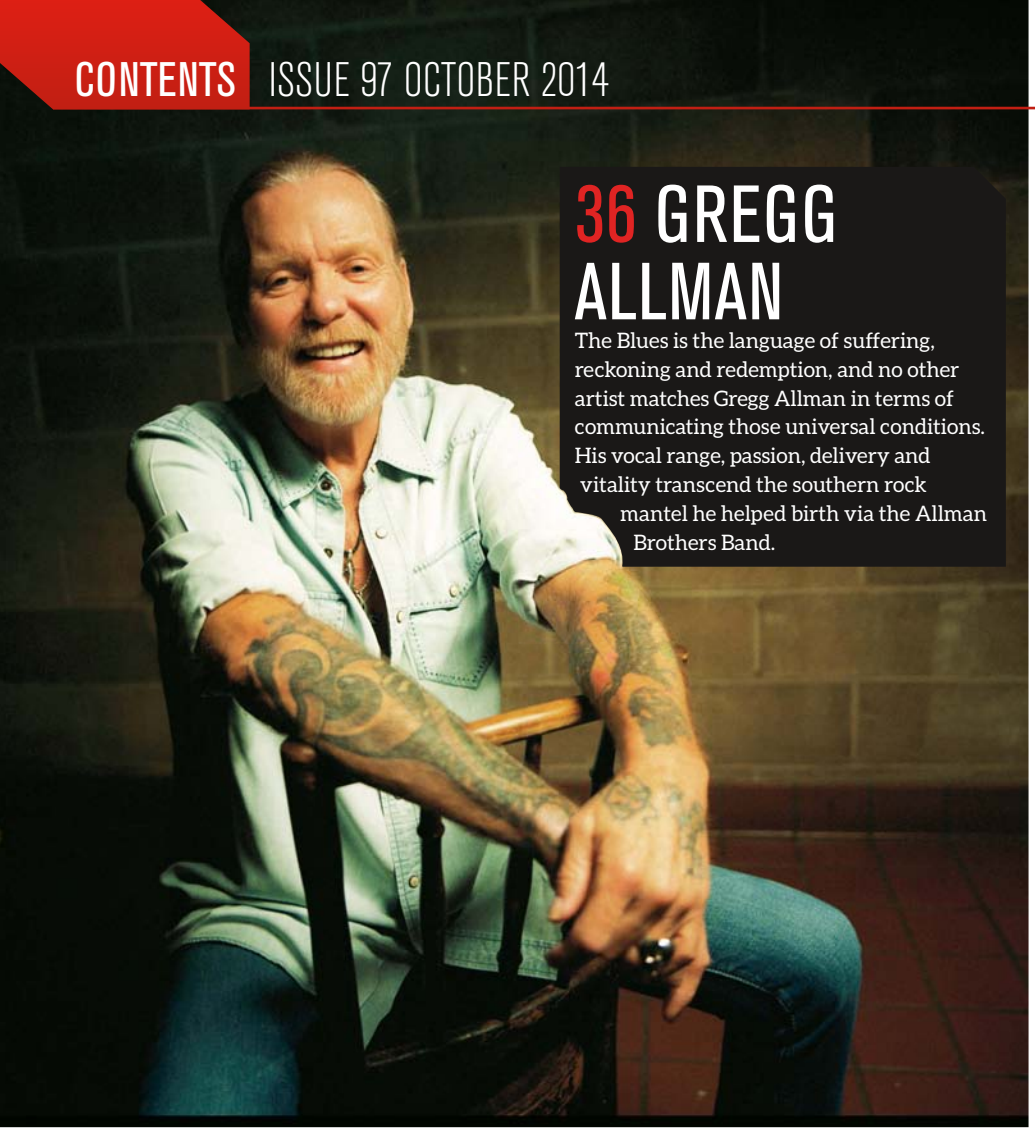
Guy Little
Editor

Check us out on:
Twitter: @acousticmag
www.facebook.com/acousticmagazine
www.youtube.com/acousticmagazine1

SUBSCRIPTION HOTLINE

Tel: 01926 339808
Fax: 01926 470400
subs@blazepublishing.co.uk
Subscription details on page 42

SCAN THIS QR CODE WITH YOUR SMARTPHONE TO GO TO OUR ONLINE SUBSCRIPTION PAGE



36 GREGG ALLMAN

The Blues is the language of suffering, reckoning and redemption, and no other artist matches Gregg Allman in terms of communicating those universal conditions. His vocal range, passion, delivery and vitality transcend the southern rock mantel he helped birth via the Allman Brothers Band.

RETUNE YOUR EARS

10 Listen to something new, with Paul Strange

16 DEVIN TOWNSEND

Metal maestro Devin Townsend has put the electric guitars aside for a new acoustic project, Casualties Of Cool. Joel McIver whispers the questions...

26 SAINT RAYMOND

With a debut album on the way and a huge support slot on Ed Sheeran's arena tour, 2014 is looking to close with a bang for 19-year-old Nottingham native, Saint Raymond.

30 VANCE JOY

James Keogh, the Melbourne lad who records under the moniker Vance Joy, burst onto the scene with his folk-pop hit 'Riptide' last year. We caught up to chat about his debut album.

18 ETHAN JOHNS

Ethan lives and breathes music – a passion which shines through his every project. Johns' artistic merit as a singer-songwriter is partially attributable to his career as a producer, which richly informs his musical lexicon, having helmed albums for Ryan Adams.

22 RICH ROBINSON

Rich Robinson, best known as the guitarist, songwriter, and founder of the Black Crowes, stands ready to complete the solo artist evolution that he began 10 years earlier. *The Ceaseless Sight*, his third solo studio album, is one that represents the full maturation of Rich as a songwriter.

GUITAR TECHNIQUES

Improve your playing with our techniques section...

With 12 pages of different level-specific techniques, whether you're a novice or an expert our columns have something for everyone.

THE EXPERTS

92 CLIVE CARROLL
A DADGAD tune with an Irish influence.

94 LEON HUNT
Too many notes, not enough melody? That's the question...

96 DANIEL HO
Polyrhythmic counterpoints on the ukulele.

98 THOMAS LEEB
Two-handed tapping with the tune 'Trickster'

100 DAVID MEAD
Discovering DADGAD

102 CHRIS WOODS
Developing your right-hand playing technique

SPECIAL FEATURES

74 THE WORKSHOP
Pepe Romero Sr. is known worldwide as a classical guitar virtuoso – and it was into this rich musical dynasty that his son, Pepe Romero Jr. was born. So, in a way, it was inevitable that Pepe would become involved with the guitar in some way, right from the start. There's a two to three year waiting list for a Romero classical guitar, used the world over by celebrated artists, including Jack Johnson.

70 THE NEXT BIG THING
This month, our "next big thing" is Ghost Trains from Stoke-on-Trent, and the songwriting core of the band, Tim Ellis. Six years and four self-produced albums later, the band is finally finding a healthy reputation thanks to a huge internet fanbase.

84 IN THE LOOP
Great songs transcend any setting whether they are played using a loop pedal, a rock trio, a big band or an orchestra. Studying everyone from Bacharach to Napalm Death to Cardiacs and Nick Drake will help to improve your songwriting and arranging skills. This month, we're looking at overdubbing with contrasting time signatures.

48 ALISTER ATKIN AND THE RELIC GUITAR REVOLUTION
The "relic" is a concept in guitar building that has been around for a few years now. Companies like Fender and Gibson have both produced aged versions of their instruments, some of which have become highly sought-after limited editions. But relics are a bit of a "Marmite" subject for many. David Mead talks to Alister Atkin about the process of ageing the White Rice relic guitar.

GEAR REVIEWS

Acoustic keeps you up to date with what's hot and what's not in our gear reviews section.

44 ATKIN WHITE RICE STANDARD AND RELIC
Something old, something new – a pair of guitars that pay tribute to two legendary bluegrass players... David Mead takes his pick.

52 FAITH VENUS PATRICK JAMES EGGLE SPECIAL EDITION
The award-winning Faith range has a new special edition in the shape of an upgraded Venus... David Mead has all of the details.

56 VGS RT-10
Yes, it's another budget instrument from a name you probably haven't heard of before. Should you stand up and take notice? Alun Lower finds out...

60 GO PRO HERO3+ BLACK MUSIC EDITION
A high definition video camera package aimed specifically at musicians – David Mead is our man with the clapperboard!

62 BREEDLOVE PREMIER CONCERT ROSEWOOD
Breedlove's latest offering tugs on the heart (and purse) strings with a combination of clever tweaks to appeal to fingerstyle players. Alun Lower investigates...

66 ULTRASOUND CP100
It may sound like it comes from UltraManchester, but the Ultrasound has in fact crossed the ocean to be with us. Should it have bothered? Sam Wise finds out.

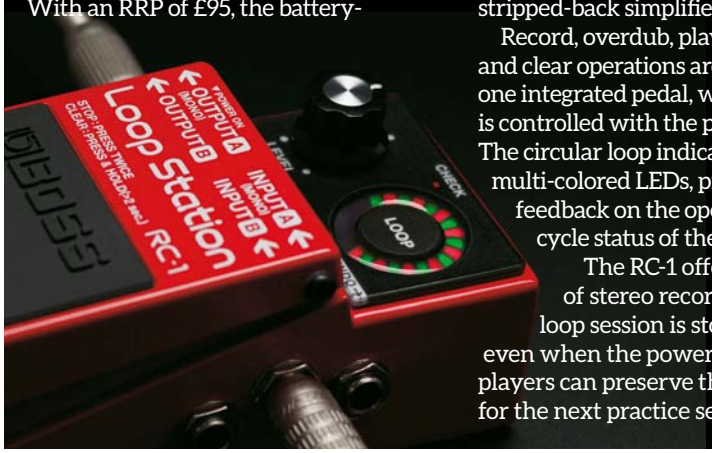
NEWS DESK

ACOUSTIC BRINGS YOU ALL OF THE LATEST PRODUCTS AND NEWS FROM THE WORLD OF ACOUSTIC MUSIC.

ROLAND TO RELEASE ENTRY-LEVEL LOOPER PEDAL

The compact Boss RC-1 Loop Station will retail for £95 joining the brand's growing range of looping pedals

Roland has added a new entry-level pedal product to its Boss looping range. With an RRP of £95, the battery-powered RC-1 Loop Station, joins the five other loopers, only this time with a stripped-back simplified option.



Record, overdub, play/stop, undo/redo, and clear operations are all achieved with one integrated pedal, while the loop level is controlled with the panel's single knob. The circular loop indicator features 24 multi-colored LEDs, providing instant feedback on the operation mode and cycle status of the current loop.

The RC-1 offers up to 12 minutes of stereo recording time. The last loop session is stored in memory even when the power is turned off, so players can preserve their performances for the next practice session or gig. The pedal can be powered with an optional PSA-series AC adapter or a single nine-volt battery giving up to four and a half hours of battery operation.

As with other Boss compact pedals, the RC-1 integrates easily onto a pedalboard with other stomps. Dual inputs and outputs let guitarists and bassists with sophisticated effects setups loop in true stereo. By using just one input and one output, the RC-1 can be used in a standard mono rig as well. Stereo operation also allows synth players to loop without sacrificing the stereo sound of their instruments.

For more information, visit: ***www.roland.co.uk***

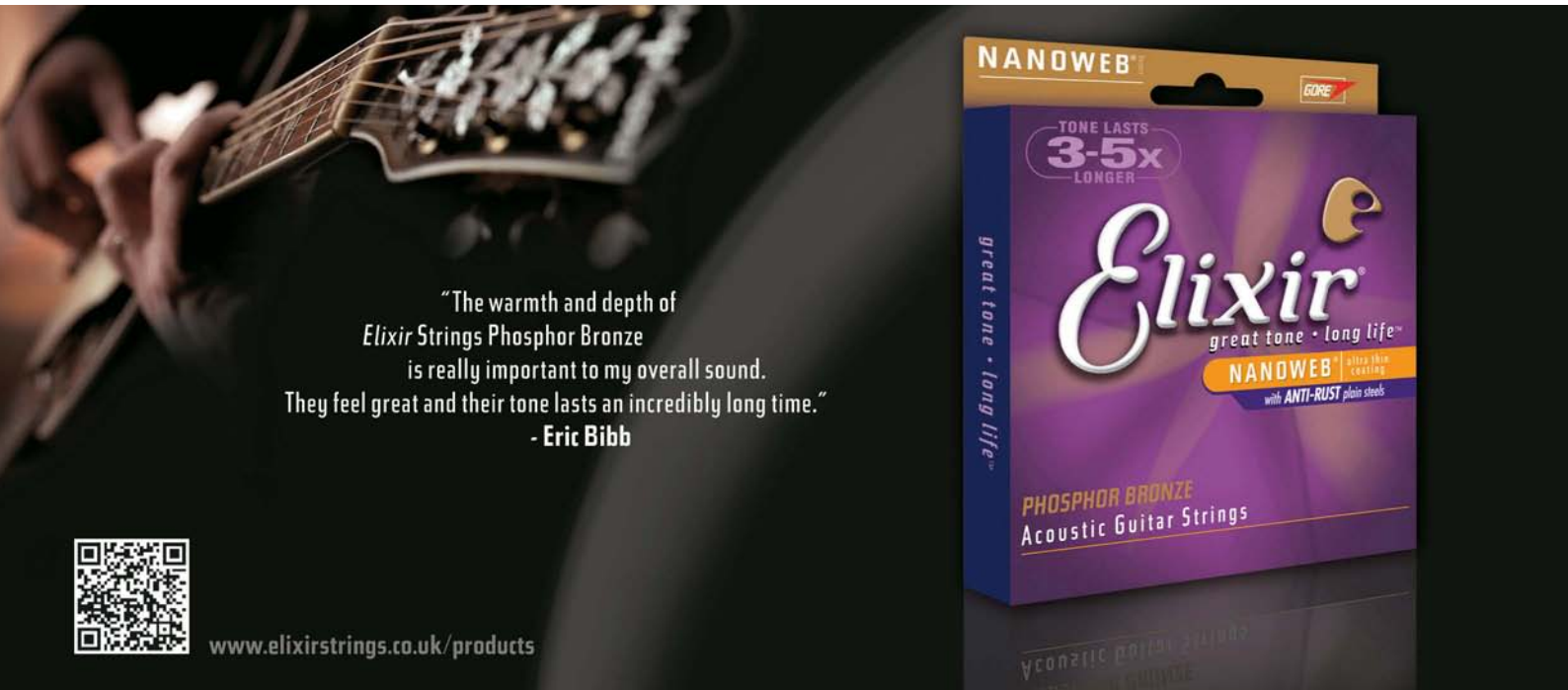
EUREKASOUND ANNOUNCES SOUNDHOLE PICKUP MOUNT

Company unveils mount to retrofit single coil and humbucker pickups to an acoustic guitar's soundhole

EurekaSound has announced the release of the EurekaSound Hole Pickup Mount – an easy and affordable way for a musician to put a magnetic pickup into an acoustic guitar. Available in both black and white 3D printed plastic, the EurekaSound Hole Pickup Mount holds any Strat-sized pickup, fits into a standard 4" sized acoustic guitar soundhole, and includes both a volume control and a 1/4" jack that slides onto the guitar endpin.

"Until now, acoustic guitar players could choose between a few dozen acoustic pickups. The EurekaSound Hole Pickup Mount literally adds several hundred more pickup options for guitarists," said Dave Graham, co-founder of EurekaSound. "Any Strat-sized pickup, both single coil and humbucker, are now are super easy to put in your acoustic."

For more info, visit: ***www.eurekasound.com***



KORG DEBUTS NEW SOUNDHOLE ACOUSTIC GUITAR TUNER

The new Rimpitch-C is the company's latest chromatic piece of kit

The Rimpitch-C expands upon Korg's Rimpitch tuner by adding chromatic functionality. By attaching the tuner inside the soundhole of an acoustic guitar, Korg says that you can observe the tuning meter at a more convenient viewing angle. With a broad detection range and a calibration function, this model allows accurate and discrete tuning in a wide variety of performance environments.

The piezo pickup rapidly and accurately detects the sound while the high-brightness LED allows for excellent visibility. The Rimpitch-C attached to the lower side of the acoustic guitar's soundhole, enabling you to check the tuning meter at the closest possible distance within your natural angle of vision.

You can leave the Rimpitch-C attached when stowing your guitar in its case, too, making transportation extremely convenient.

The Rimpitch-C can be installed in a wide range of acoustic guitars. A hook conveniently prevents the tuner from falling inside of the guitar and a rubber grip ensures the instrument won't suffer any surface scratching.

The Rimpitch-C will retail for £23.99 and will be available to buy on the high street from October 2014.

For more information, visit: ***www.korg.com***

MITCHELL GUITARS LAUNCHES ALL-SOLID ELEMENT SERIES

Budget range from US brand will feature the brand new Fishman INK preamps with a built-in tuner

Designed for the discriminating player, Mitchell's Element Series guitars combine select high-quality tonewoods, premium oil-rubbed satin finishes, and exquisite workmanship to create instruments with unequalled playability and remarkable sonic character.

Element Series guitars feature solid spruce or red cedar tops with sapele or Indian rosewood bodies, providing a wide range of tonal possibilities. Mitchell's shifted, scalloped bracing enables each instrument's top to breathe and resonate more freely, delivering enhanced tone and projection. High-ratio die-cast tuners keep tuning stable, while ebony keys and flamed maple binding give each Element Series model the look and feel of a far more expensive instrument.

Element Series acoustic-electric models are outfitted with Fishman's new INK preamps and electronics, giving each instrument the ultimate in tonal control, along with a built-in chromatic tuner.

The new Element Series is available in two combinations of woods: the ME1, ME1CE and ME1ACE feature striped sapele bodies with a solid spruce top for a traditional, punchy mid-range tone. The ME2CEC model is built with Indian rosewood back and sides and a solid red cedar top for enhanced low end, warm and rich midrange, and crystalline highs. Element Series guitars are available in dreadnought and auditorium styles, with some models featuring modified Venetian style cutaways. Like all Mitchell guitars, they are covered by a lifetime warranty.

For more information, visit: ***www.mitchellguitars.com***

The Phosphor Bronze tone you love – for longer

-Extended tone life
-Consistent performance
-Easy on your fingers
-Smooth feel
-Reduced finger squeak

Elixir® strings

facebook.com/elixirstrings
twitter.com/elixirstrings
youtube.com/elixirstringsmedia

ELX-258-ADV-EN-JUN13

GORE, ELIXIR, NANOWEB, POLYWEB, GREAT TONE • LONG LIFE, "e" icon, and other designs are trademarks of W. L. Gore & Associates. ©2013 W. L. Gore & Associates, (UK) Limited

RETUNE YOUR EARS

Presenting new, interesting or alternative musicians. Listen to something different.
With Paul Strange

KAELA ROWAN
STYLE… (SINGER-SONGWRITER)

I'm from the Scottish folk and Gaelic traditional music scene, but have many influences, including world music. I play acoustic guitar, ukulele, hand percussion and kalimba. The music on my debut album *Menagerie* is mostly original. Some of it is delicate and emotive; at other times it's vibey with big soundscapes and wildlife sounds. "Menagerie" refers to the wildlife we're surrounded by, and also to events, and people. My musical partner James Mackintosh – from Shooglenifty and *Transatlantic Sessions* – was integral to the album. Responsible for the engineering and many instrumental parts, he was fantastic to work with. My mum's dog Marty was left with us during a recording session. Every time a note was touched on the guitar, Marty would sing his head off. So we set up some mics and let him go for it. I play a brown Daion acoustic 78 Heritage dreadnought. She's been through the wars but still has a big warm sound and tone. She's fitted with a Fishman pickup and I use a Fishman preamp. I also have a beautiful Terada classical guitar – which appears on 'Move On Sam' and David Byrne's 'Naïve Melody' on the album – plus a Stagg ukulele and a kalimba. Sometimes a lyric inspires me to write chord progressions, and other times it will be the chords that inspire a lyric. I had a year of classical guitar when I was a kid, which probably helped with finger picking, but mostly I taught myself. John Martyn, Joan Armatrading, Neil Young, James Taylor and Stephen Stills are influences.

www.kaelarowan.com

YORICK CORMACK
STYLE… (SINGER-SONGWRITER)

I'm a geek with an unhealthy fascination for 19th-century military history, especially the Crimean War. That's why my new band is called First Charge Of The Light Brigade. Based in Glasgow, it has elements of pop, folk, alt country and rock. Playing with different musicians inspires me to play out of my comfort zone. Our self-titled debut album is out now. A slow burner, it's about embracing change and looking to the future. My favourite song is 'My One Track Mind' as it was the last one we recorded and therefore I haven't heard it a million times. All the songs I've ever written have been on an acoustic guitar. My current pride and joy is a Martin D-18 sunburst. It's a real pleasure to play. Sometimes I use a Gibson J-45 or Takamine 12-string for recording. I also have a Takamine EN10C, which I've had for years. I can't remember a day when I've not played, even if it's only for a few minutes. I'm self-taught and still learning all the time. I don't think there's a song on the album with standard E tuning. Open D, open G and low E dropped to C are great, and I also use EADGAD a lot. I've many influences and heroes, including Crosby, Stills and Nash, Neil Young, Richard Thompson, Bob Dylan, Ryan Adams, Jeff Tweedy from Wilco, and Neil Finn. I'm constantly recording with First Charge Of The Light Brigade. We have gigs in Scotland, are planning a UK tour, and in November we're off to Germany. You can always learn new things as a songwriter or player, but you should be having fun most of the time!

www.firstchargeofthelightbrigade.com

CAMILLE BLOOM
STYLE… (SINGER-SONGWRITER)

I'm a former English teacher, based in Seattle. Playing music on the side, I turned professional nine years ago. I play lyrically driven feisty acoustic rock, sometimes solo, sometimes with a band. I also visit schools and community centres, giving music industry workshops. I taught myself guitar, having no idea of chords or keys. More recently, I've taken some music theory lessons so I can be a better teacher. I play a 2007 Gibson Advanced Jumbo dreadnought acoustic guitar with a sunburst finish. I love its deep, warm, low tones and the full body sound. Everything I want in an acoustic guitar is present – great action, balance, clear tone, and sound that resonates for days. When I play bigger rooms, I use a standard DI – but when I tour acoustically, I use my Fishman Loudbox Performer 100-watt acoustic amp. Occasionally, I will pull out my beautiful hollow-body Epiphone electric to record some lead guitar, but I don't gig with it. I loved recording last year's EP *Big Dreams* with Don Gunn, one of my favourite engineer/producers. I trust his ear implicitly. My favourite track is 'This System Is Broken', which I feel the most passionate about lyrically. My catchiest songs are written on guitar first, while my most lyrically poignant songs are written in poetry form and then set to music. I like getting outside of myself and viewing the world from a different perspective. Future plans? A US tour in September and October and writing my next album for release next year.

www.camillebloom.com

Avalon.
The spiritual home of Irish guitar making.

avalonguitars.com

Reborn, producing the finest hand crafted acoustic guitars.

flixelpix.com | tombaxter.com

Ard Rí A370/K

Ard Rí L2-310FC

Arc L2-320B/Celtic

AVALON GUITARS

avalonguitars.com

Celebrating our 25th year!!
Instore - Online
The MUSIC ROOM
www.themusicroom-online.co.uk
Autumn Sale -Many Guitars Half Price
The Music Room, Cleckheaton, Yorkshire BD19 3RR 01274 879 768

Lewis

BSG Musical Instruments

RS HAND-MADE STRINGED INSTRUMENTS

Lani

Collings GUITARS

C.F. Martin & Co. EST. 1833

Eastman Handcrafted Guitars and Mandolins

ASK THE EXPERTS Musicians' Union mu

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Most of us sat through the Commonwealth Games in awe at the athletes who devote their entire lives to winning gold. But working as a professional musician, you should think of yourself as an athlete, too, according to physiotherapists who treat music-related injuries.

IT'S NOT UNUSUAL

The most common problems are caused simply by playing for too long, and are often made worse by an incorrect technique or posture. It is so easy to overlook the effects of frequent long journeys, cold or badly-lit rehearsal spaces, and the physical effort of repeatedly lifting and carrying heavy instruments and equipment.

If not treated in time, these can lead to focal dystonia, which causes part of the body to stop working normally. It has been known to make musicians' fingers twist or curl involuntarily, or fail to respond entirely. Focal dystonia does not necessarily hurt, but it is essential to seek treatment the moment that it is noticed.

It's easy to work out the cause of some problems. Performing with your guitar slung low down by your knees, for example, may look good but puts a strain on your body.

However the cause of music related pain isn't always obvious. Arm pain, for example, could stem from overused fingers, underdeveloped shoulder muscles or tension in the back of the neck.

TAKE NOTICE OF PAIN

Most music-related problems do cause pain which, conversely, is good because it makes people seek help. Never ignore pain or any difficulties with your movement. Physios can usually treat pain quite simply at an early stage, using techniques such as massage and ultrasound. Tailored stretches and exercises can also help to heal the injured part and strengthen its supporting muscles.

BE PROACTIVE

Always warm up before playing and cool down afterwards. Take a brisk five-minute walk before a performance, to improve blood circulation to your muscles and relieve stress.

Do stretching exercises every day and, while sitting down, before the performance itself – the right daily stretching and strengthening routine can counteract the damage caused by posture or playing.

Constantly check your posture and playing techniques. Variety of movement is important. Vary your position if you are sitting for a long time. Consider seeing a specialist, such as a physio with a music background, to see if there is something you should or should not be doing.

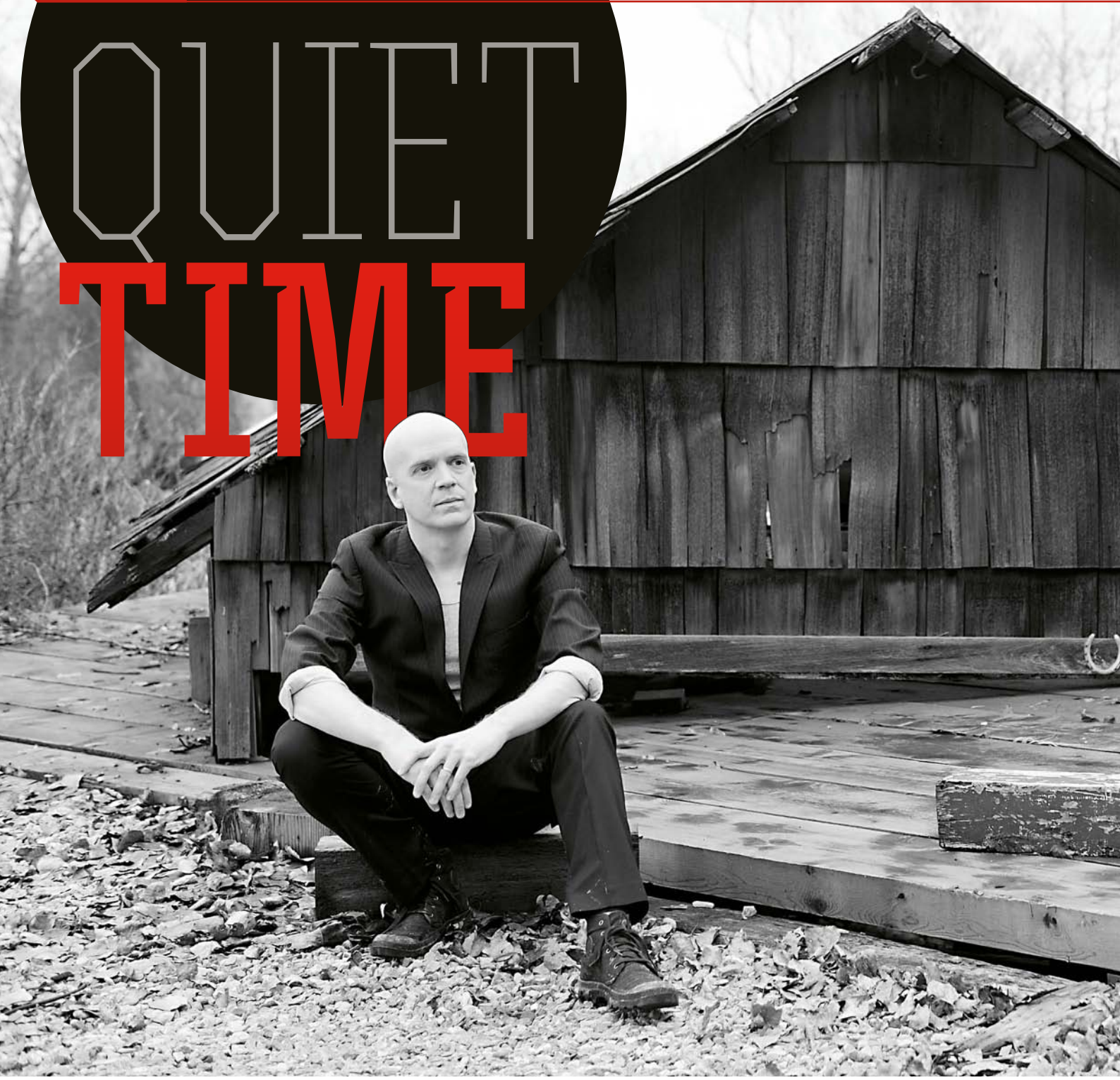
Athletes and dancers have coaching throughout their professional lives, so postural problems or faulty movements are picked up and corrected. For musicians, especially freelancers, these are usually picked up only after the pain starts. Don't leave it too late. If you feel pain or think something is wrong, MU members should contact British Association for Performing Arts Medicine (BAPAM, bapam.org.uk) for free advice.

www.musiciansunion.org.uk

POWER ON
OUTPUT A
OUTPUT B (MONO)
INPUT A
INPUT B (MONO)
Loop Station
RC-1
STOP : PRESS TWICE
CLEAR : PRESS & HOLD(>2 sec.)
LEVEL

BOSS
WWW.ROLAND.CO.UK/NEW-PRODUCTS
CHECK
LOOP
BOSS RC-1 LOOPSTATION
EASY TO OPERATE
SILENT SWITCH
LOOP POSITION INDICATOR
12 MINUTES OF STEREO RECORDING TIME
STEREO INPUTS AND OUTPUTS
5 YEAR WARRANTY
EXTERNAL FOOTSWITCH OPTIONS
£95 RRP

QUIET TIME



Metal maestro ***Devin Townsend*** *has put the electric guitars aside for a new acoustic project, Casualties Of Cool.* ***Joel McIver*** *whispers the questions…*

'Life is so loud, man,' sighs Devin Townsend, master of extremely violent heavy metal for two decades and counting. 'Not to put too fine a point on it, but if you add up family life, music, emails, human idiocy and my own neuroses, everything just compounds to the point where there's an omnipresent din in my world. What I've typically done for so many years is something that I still have a great affection for – loud music – but I find that at my age I can't rationalise the outbursts of anger that I once thought I could get away with.'

Acoustic music as a cure for the stresses and strains of life? We'll take that, and on Casualties Of Cool's new album, a self-titled 15-tracker on which Townsend is joined by sweet-larynxed chanteuse Ché Aimee Dorval and drummer Morgan Ågren, the comparison between the soft, understated tunes and the immense velocity and aggression of his usual work is hard to express. Beautifully textured, economically arranged and big on atmosphere, Casualties of Cool's songs are a tonic for the soul.

Townsend is on a roll. 'When you've got kids and parents, a lot

of patience is required, and I find that I don't have an escape valve, because I don't do drugs and I don't drink any more,' he tells us. 'My life is this sort of pent-up hostility, and I found that Casualties was a great outlet for me to be really quiet about that anger and that frustration. The result is this passive-aggressive "Everything's so loud, so I'm going to be quiet"'.

Play any of the album's songs and you'll be struck by the sense of peace that emanates from them. 'I thought, it can't be quiet enough!' laughs the great man. 'It's going to be difficult for me not to wax on about the Casualties record, because I really, really love it. At the same time, I went into it fully aware that my identity is such that a record like this is pretty much going to fall on deaf ears, I would think. It's not going to happen, but even if it doesn't get a lot of attention, having an outlet that allows me to make things over a long time with a singer who I have a great deal of affection for could be just the thing the doctor ordered, right? Maybe there is something liberating about that as well, knowing going into it that the reason I'm making it is for myself. It's not about breaking into an alt-country scene, or anything like that.

Devin Townsend as a chicken-pickin' good ol' boy... is that the plan? 'God no! In fact I'd be the first in line to say that country-rock does my head in. I hear the affected twang that people put on because it's a kind of music that sells a lot, and it makes my skin crawl. My influences in terms of this sort of stuff come much more from 1940s Americana. There was really something about that Depression-era music that was creepy as all get-out. There were a lot of things under the surface there: a lot of really dark elements of that John Steinbeck-era stuff that lend themselves to the atmospheric music that I've always done.'

'I was born and raised in Canada,' he continues, 'and I would say that 85% of our population is a bunch of rednecks. Know what I mean? That includes me and a lot of my family. There's an element that I totally relate to. I grew up with that music, so it comes from a place of legitimate interest as opposed to some sort of whim where I'm thinking, "Okay, now I'm a country guy!" or whatever.'

Townsend used some classic, if also typically left-field, acoustic guitars on the album, he says. 'I've got four or five: I worked with Alvarez when they were making the Yari stuff,' he explains. 'Ché plays an Alvarez too. They made a couple for me, one a baritone, and one a standard model. The model is YBN96C, this big single-cut baritone with a natural cedar top, it sounds really cool. I wrote the songs on those two guitars. Then I've got an Alvarez 12-string Yari that's really beautiful, it's a DY62C12 – he said, pretending it's from memory while looking straight into the soundhole!'

'I've also got this old Martin,' he adds. 'The guy who gave it to me is a luthier and told me it was a '72 or a '73. It's a dreadnought style rather than a single cutaway, but it was submerged in a flood years ago and it was totally messed up. My luthier friend dried it out and redid it, so it's not completely beat up, but it's definitely been through some tough times. The sound is really mellow, maybe because of the trauma that it's been through, although you can drive a truck underneath the 12th fret. The intonation is a little whacked, but for chordal stuff it's great.'

Townsend being the owner of a fairly hyperactive brain, his creativity hasn't stopped just because he has a new album out. 'As soon as I finished Casualties I was like, "Now I want to make a puppet show!" so I went off and got these crazy puppets,' he says. 'Casualties has definitely had a calming influence on me, apart from the fact that my kids are on summer vacation and they're doing cartwheels in front of me trying to get my attention while I'm mixing records. I can't seem to find a happy medium. But I'm going to continue doing Casualties, because Ché's got an awesome voice and it complements a vision that I had of "negative riffs" that is very satisfying. It's funny: when the album came out, some reviews said that nothing was engaging about the music. I was like, "Do you know how hard that was to achieve?" The majority of my music just bashes you in the face, saying "Listen! Listen!"'

'My whole intention,' Townsend concludes, 'was to be like a little AM radio that hums away in the background and you don't have to pay too much attention to it. We mastered it really quiet and warm. It was a real labour of love between it being understated and being boring. I love that subtlety, even though I'm not that subtle a person...'

Casualties Of Cool's debut album is out now.
www.casualtiesofcool.com

THE RECKONING OF ETHAN JOHNS

Ethan Johns talks about learning from the best in the business, being an in-demand producer, and his new album The Reckoning...

Ethan lives and breathes music – a passion which shines through his every project. Johns' artistic merit as a singer-songwriter is partially attributable to his career as a producer, which richly informs his musical lexicon, having helmed albums for Ryan Adams, Kings of Leon, the Jayhawks, Ray LaMontagne, Tom Jones and Paul McCartney, among others.

An impossibly accomplished professional, Johns is also pragmatic. He is living in a WW campervan rather than a hotel while simultaneously winding up a UK tour and recording his third solo album. And that vehicle is where *Acoustic* chats with him about his latest album *The Reckoning*. Johns is easy going, confident, yet humble. *The Reckoning* is raw-yet-refined collection of songs with a well-articulated storyline, steeped in mellifluous guitar playing. He is the son of legendary rock producer, Glyn Johns (a veritable superstar among producers of the late 1960s-70s). No surprise then that Ethan was "obsessed" with music since he became self-aware as a child.

For some, coming from such a ratified musical family might have yielded unbearable expectation and undelivered potential, but Ethan has carved his own career as both a musician and producer on his own merit. His success lies not only with his experience but also an intrinsic emotional connection to music and the people he works with. In conversation, he's equal part humility and confidence. Johns' honest approach resonates throughout *The Reckoning*.

Four years after *If Not Now Then When*, you've released a second solo album and have produced a plethora of artists. There's clearly a symbiosis between you and Ryan Adams. But why did you choose him to produce *The Reckoning*?
When it came time to find someone to be sure I was hitting the emotional mark musically, he was the one. I thought he'd be a good sounding board and we have had a really good connection since the first time we met. It was immediate. Plus he's a good friend which helps a lot and our work process is really quite special. I wanted this record to be startling. It was a challenge for sure because he pushed me for honest and truthful performances and that was scary a little but I'm glad he didn't waver and I think he benefitted the overall project.

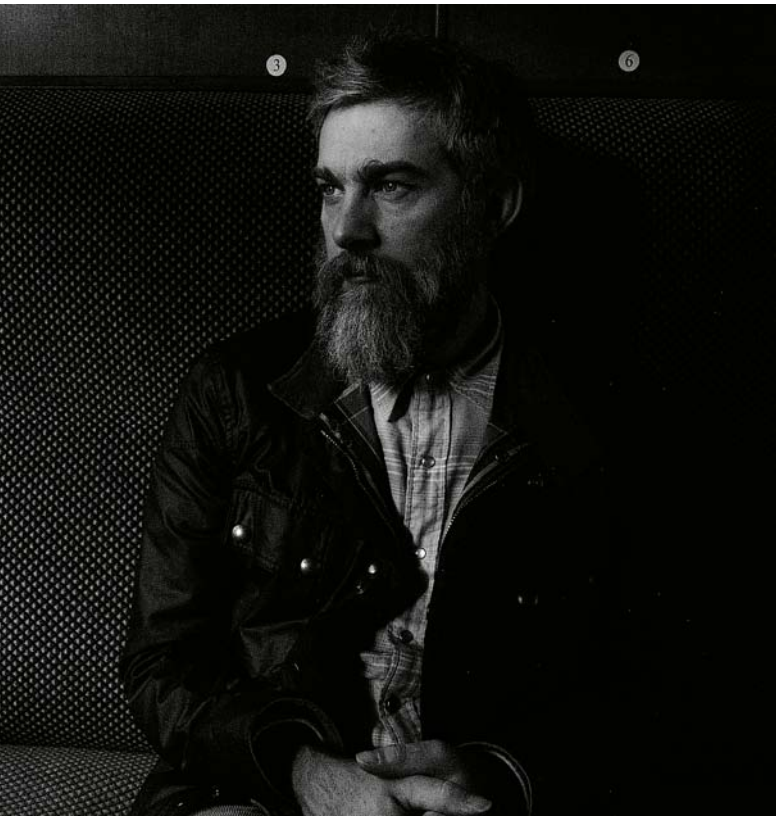
You push for that purity as a producer too, right?
Definitely. We know what we like and we respond to the same kind of artistry. But it's difficult to look at your own work – I think it's difficult for an artist to do so. Writing is an instinctive process for me, but relinquishing control ended up being a positive aspect.

How have you evolved as an artist between the two albums?
I think touring a lot has, on a fundamental level, helped me as a singer and performer and it's helped me to not second-guess myself. I trust my instincts a lot more and there's a real interesting stillness to the last album. Now, because I'm doing this a lot I'm a lot freer – improvisational. It's one of the most exciting things about this. I'm making the third album now and it's been such fun, the most fun I've had on any recording session I've had.

You've got a young family. Is it a balancing act for you as a father and husband, and as a touring musician?
Being away from them is heart breaking, but we're all on the journey together and they know being a musician is who I am. I'm really lucky they accept that, but the girls are budding musicians themselves and get a lot of pleasure out of music around the house. Georgina, the little one, is already a great drummer. Delilah plays piano, violin, and ukulele – so does my wife. We've got instruments knocking around everywhere, so we play a lot.

Your dad had a similar life to yours, except for the touring...
Yeah, he was away a lot to make records in other parts of the world. We dealt with it because it was who dad was. The bottom line is that I felt loved as a kid, and mine feel loved too.

I've never really discussed Glyn (Johns, father) with you, but I suspect you are proud of his work.
I'm incredibly proud of his ethos, what he stands for, how he made those records. I feel he was the best at what he did among his peers at that time. I was incredibly lucky to see how he worked. There's a reason why those records stand up. In mind, I think there is no other record maker who had anything like his career, his evolution of sounds from the early '60s to his redefining of music. Every couple of years he'd rewrite the rulebook by making another benchmark of music. He's writing a book that will be out



later this year and I've read it and it's fascinating: how the business has evolved and he has really interesting things to say about his experience and what it's like today. I think people can learn a lot from him today.

Aside from your own music, you still get inundated with production offers. Are you having to turn down jobs not only due to your own career, but because you can be choosey?
I turn down 99% of those jobs I get offered and not because I'm judgemental about what those people are doing, but If it's not inspiring to me I'm not going to be able to do a good job. It has to touch me emotionally.

Yet so much music today lacks that core element by people utilising computers rather than real instruments.
What makes me sad about the industry was that engineering was an apprenticeship. Now learning the craft on the job is almost gone. I was lucky to learn from him [Glyn] and several other producers and engineers and there's so much to learn by doing and watching. You can't really learn that in class. You can't build without experience. It's sad to me that the studios are closing and unique artists are being overtly marginalised by the business. We're probably at the darkest point of the industry right now. Yet there are many artists making incredible music out there.

Why are you staying in a campervan while in London?
It's cheaper than staying in an expensive hotel and I want to be sure financially that I don't have to put undue pressure on what I do to be more commercial. This way, I can do my records on a small budget and do it my way. It's incredibly difficult to make money as an artist. It's almost impossible to make a living out of selling records now, so when I tour I never do it beyond my means.

***The Reckoning* is not just an internal journey; it also chronicles a fictional family of your own devices and their emigration to 19th century America, during the pioneer era. Your lyrics convey multiple meanings. How do your lyrical ideas come to fruition?**
I just try not to edit myself as I'm writing. I can let myself go through the creative door that opens and edit ideas, words later. I don't struggle with lyrics. You're either in a place mentally or you're not. With this one I had a story in my head with plot points and then when I went to write it just flowed. I'm just a storyteller.

Your live shows tend to be inclusive for your audience.
It's all about making music and creating an experience for the audience. It's really exciting, as you never know what's going to happen. It's a journey you go on with the audience and it's a communal journey.

Labels may be a bit constraining, but you seem to be quite comfortable in the folk / Americana vein.
I think so, yeah. It's a good starting point when you go on the discovery as to how music has developed and passed on you find the common DNA. The origins of the blues, country and folk are closer than you think. There's shared DNA in Appalachian music with Scotland, and the Mediterranean shares roots with music from the Middle East and so forth. But no, I don't like to put it in a box because it all springs from the same well.

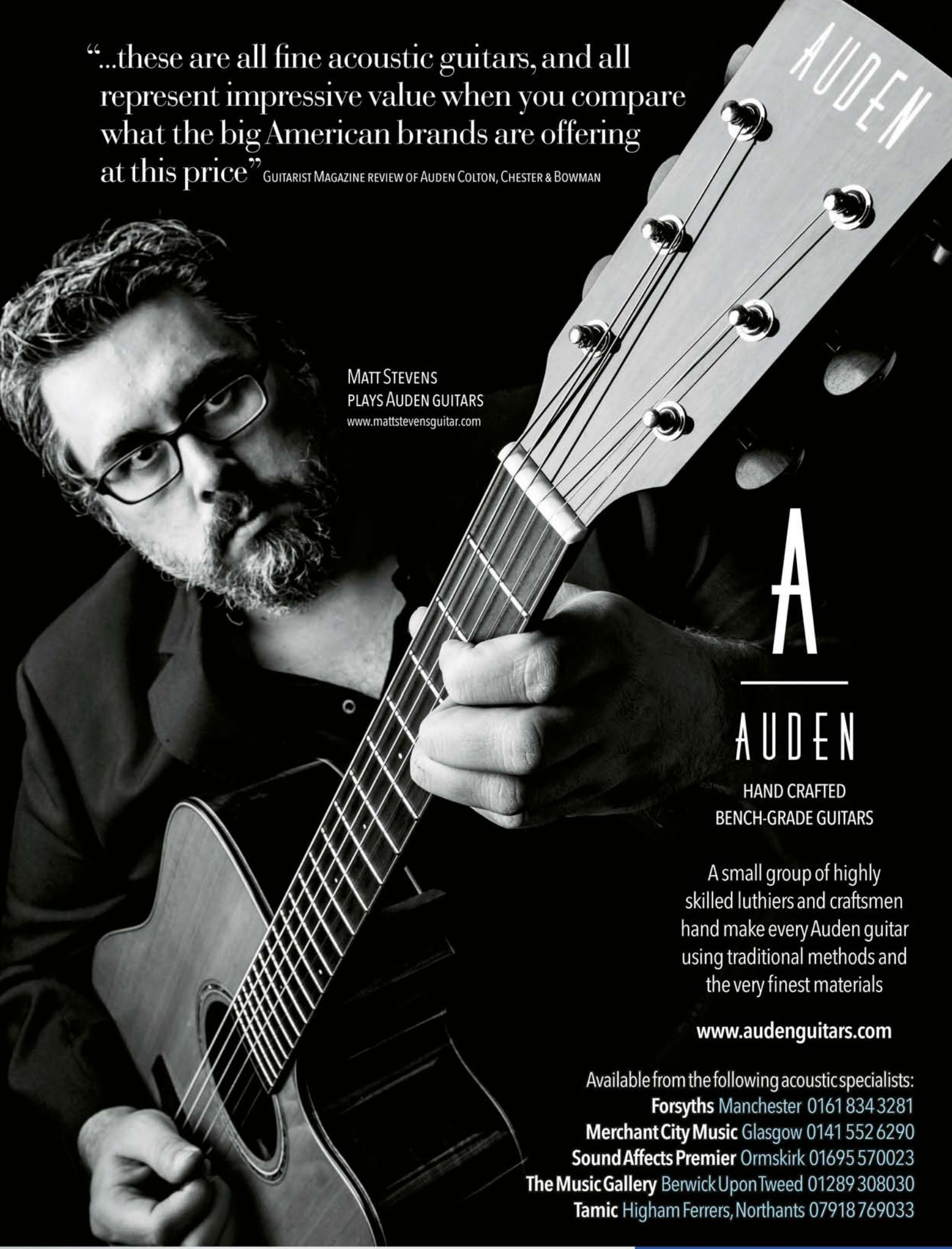
Tell us about your guitars used on *The Reckoning*.
That was recorded on a Gibson Everly Brothers acoustic. I've been playing a Martin D-41 live, which was stolen from me on the road a while ago. Amazingly, I got it back through the keen eye of a friend who spotted it for sale online and the diligent work of the West Midlands police force. The new record I'm working on was all played on my '69 Martin D-18. That is the first decent acoustic I ever bought. Richie Hayward and I drove down to a vintage guitar fair in Anaheim, California, 20 years ago, packed with dealer stalls from all over the US – I'd never seen anything like it. I'd just been on the road with CSN for three months, so I had a few dollars in my pocket and I found this guitar. It's pretty beat up but it's a part of me now and it has an incredible sound. It has quite a wide grain on it's top, and not much varnish. It's light but so open sounding and responsive.

It seems that when I find a guitar that's right for me, the wide grain seems pretty consistent through most of them, apart from the Everly, which is just a freak of a guitar. I write a lot on a special guitar that was made in the early '70s by the luthier David Russell Young. It's made from an old piece of California redwood he found in San Francisco. I think it's from an old salvaged fireplace. I found it through Fred Walecki who new David well and hooked many acoustic players up with David Russell Young guitars. Anyway, David gave this guitar to his brother, and now I have it. It has an incredible spirit. It can be so delicate and precise, tonally, which is consistent with the guitars of his I've played, but it can also be an absolute cannon if you dig in. It's a remarkable instrument. I'm honoured to be its caretaker for now.

Plus, I have just welcomed a new addition to the family. I was looking to replace the D-41 after it had been stolen and chanced upon the best J-200 I've ever played. It's a '64, custom, natural finish. I put it down though because the price tag was a little out of my reach, but I didn't forget about it. It was just too special. A few weeks later my wife bought it for me for my birthday. I reckon I'm the luckiest man alive...

Ethan Johns' The Reckoning *is out now.*
www.ethanjohns.com

"...these are all fine acoustic guitars, and all represent impressive value when you compare what the big American brands are offering at this price" Guitarist Magazine review of Auden Colton, Chester & Bowman



Matt Stevens
plays Auden guitars
www.mattstevensguitar.com

AUDEN

HAND CRAFTED
BENCH-GRADE GUITARS

A small group of highly skilled luthiers and craftsmen hand make every Auden guitar using traditional methods and the very finest materials

www.audenguitars.com

Available from the following acoustic specialists:
Forsyths Manchester 0161 834 3281
Merchant City Music Glasgow 0141 552 6290
Sound Affects Premier Ormskirk 01695 570023
The Music Gallery Berwick Upon Tweed 01289 308030
Tamic Higham Ferrers, Northants 07918 769033

Distributed in the UK by: **Zoom UK Distribution Limited**
15 Weston Barns, Hitchin Road, Weston, Hertfordshire, SG4 7AX Tel: +44 8432 080 999 Fax: +44 8432 080 666
www.zoomcorp.co.uk /zoomcorpuk /zoomuk YouTube /zoomcorpuk

ZOOM

RICH PICKINGS

Rich Robinson, best known as the guitarist, songwriter, and founder of the Black Crowes, stands ready to complete the solo artist evolution that he began 10 years earlier with his third studio album ***The Ceaseless Sight***

WORDS: ANDY HUGHES IMAGES: LAURENT CHANEZ

In addition to being the driving force behind the Black Crowes, one of the most influential and appreciated bands of the last 25 years, Rich Robinson has also developed a solo career for the last 10 years. With the Crowes on hiatus, Rich has recorded a new solo album, *The Ceaseless Sight*, and he took some time out to chat with us about the record, working without the Crowes, and the increasing appeal of the acoustic guitar.

'I think when you play a really good acoustic guitar it just feels like nothing else – there really is nothing else like it. Often with an acoustic, you are sitting by yourself in a room, just you and the guitar, and that intimacy and that connection that you can get with the guitar is so special – and also the intimacy and connection that you can convey to an audience as well when it is recorded. I used to listen to people like Mississippi John McDowell, and Nick Drake, and the feelings that those guys could generate with an acoustic guitar, there really is just nothing like that. The way Bob Dylan played his guitar on *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan*, that guitar would just sing. It's like those guitars, and the sound those players could make, that was something organic, and that was an aspect of music that I was really drawn into from a very early age. My favourites were always Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young. I always loved the guitar playing of Steven Stills, and the way Neil Young played acoustic always really appealed to me growing up, they were a big influence on me wanting to be a musician. I write a good 80 per cent of my songs on an acoustic guitar.'

So on the basis that the acoustic guitar has been, and still is, such an important part of Rich's life, it comes as no surprise that he enjoys stepping outside the band he tours with, to play solo songs on stage.

'I am on tour right now, and I have a full band with me, but on occasion I do sing and play just with an acoustic, and I like that because it does have a whole different vibe to it. I always think if a song can exist on that level, without all the additional stuff from the band, then it is a good song. I write my songs that way, that's

my way of judging how strong a song is – will it stand up if you strip it back? If it does, then it's okay by me. I write my songs that way, so I know that if I want to strip them right back again, I can because I know it will work.'

What is your current acoustic guitar of choice? 'I have a bunch of guitars, and right now Martin has teamed up with the Zemaitis people to remake some of the original Zemaitis models, like the George Garrison one, and I have one of the prototypes from those models, and it is just a fantastic guitar. I also have a Quadro that George Gruhn from Nashville had made to his exact specifications, and a parlour guitar which I have had made by a luthier called Danny Davis who works in Alabama. His company is called Tangled String, and the guitar he made for me is just amazing. He called up and asked if he could bring some guitars along to one of our shows, and he called in to see us and brought about five guitars with him, and they were just awesome – he makes really wonderful guitars. He does that in his spare time because his day job is actually at the local space centre, there is a big space centre there in Alabama and, interestingly, he is a rocket scientist there. Seriously, he actually is a rocket scientist, so he can say that building guitars is not rocket science, and he knows that it's true,' he laughs.

'I just like the way they project,' he says of parlour guitars. 'I like the compact feel of them to play. I have never owned jumbo or big-bodied guitars. I always had a feeling that the sound would get lost; it always sounded like the sound was thin to me, which is ironic given that they are the bigger instruments.'

So while the Black Crowes is on an extended break right now, Rich can enjoy working on his own music, and making all the decisions. 'Well, yeah, that is true. The Crowes has been around for such a long time and, like any band, there is politics going on, and that is the way bands work, but it is nice to be able to have the initial say, and also the final say on the way things are going to be. I guess one of the real differences between working with a band and working alone is there is no one really to act as quality control. In a band situation, we usually arrive at a consensus for the sound of each song, but when it's just me, I am the consensus, there is no one else to put an opinion in. I don't mind that because I am seriously my own strongest critic.'

'The real bottom line is that you can't write for someone else, because you don't know who that someone else is, so you have no idea what they like anyway. If you go down that route, you become less of a musician, and more of a service industry, writing and playing songs that you hope other people are going to like. Not only will you not please everyone else but also you end up not pleasing yourself either, which renders the entire exercise as pointless. One thing about acoustic music, as any acoustic musician will tell you, is there is no hiding, no faking. If you don't believe in your songs as you sing them the audience will work that out instantly, and your show will not be a success.'

'Do you know, I don't actually have a favourite song from this album. I really don't, because I was careful about choosing only songs I really liked to put on the record. If I didn't really like a song and have a real good feeling about it, then I would drop it, so I can honestly say that I like all of them, and I like playing all of them. I guess that as the world grows ever more complicated, that people are drawn to things that are a little simpler and more earthbound, something that you don't have to have a computer to figure it out and to make it work. The pendulum is always swinging and right now in music it is swinging back to a simpler sound. I have no problem with that – no problem at all.'

Rich Robinson's The Ceaseless Sight is out now. He plays UK dates throughout November.
www.richrobinson.net

TheJoeBrownLakaUkuleles
Laka™
Soprano Laka Ukulele
Concert Laka Ukulele
"These ukes are fine instruments, with perfect intonation, and I'm happy to lend my name to them."
Joe Brown
www.jhs.co.uk/laka

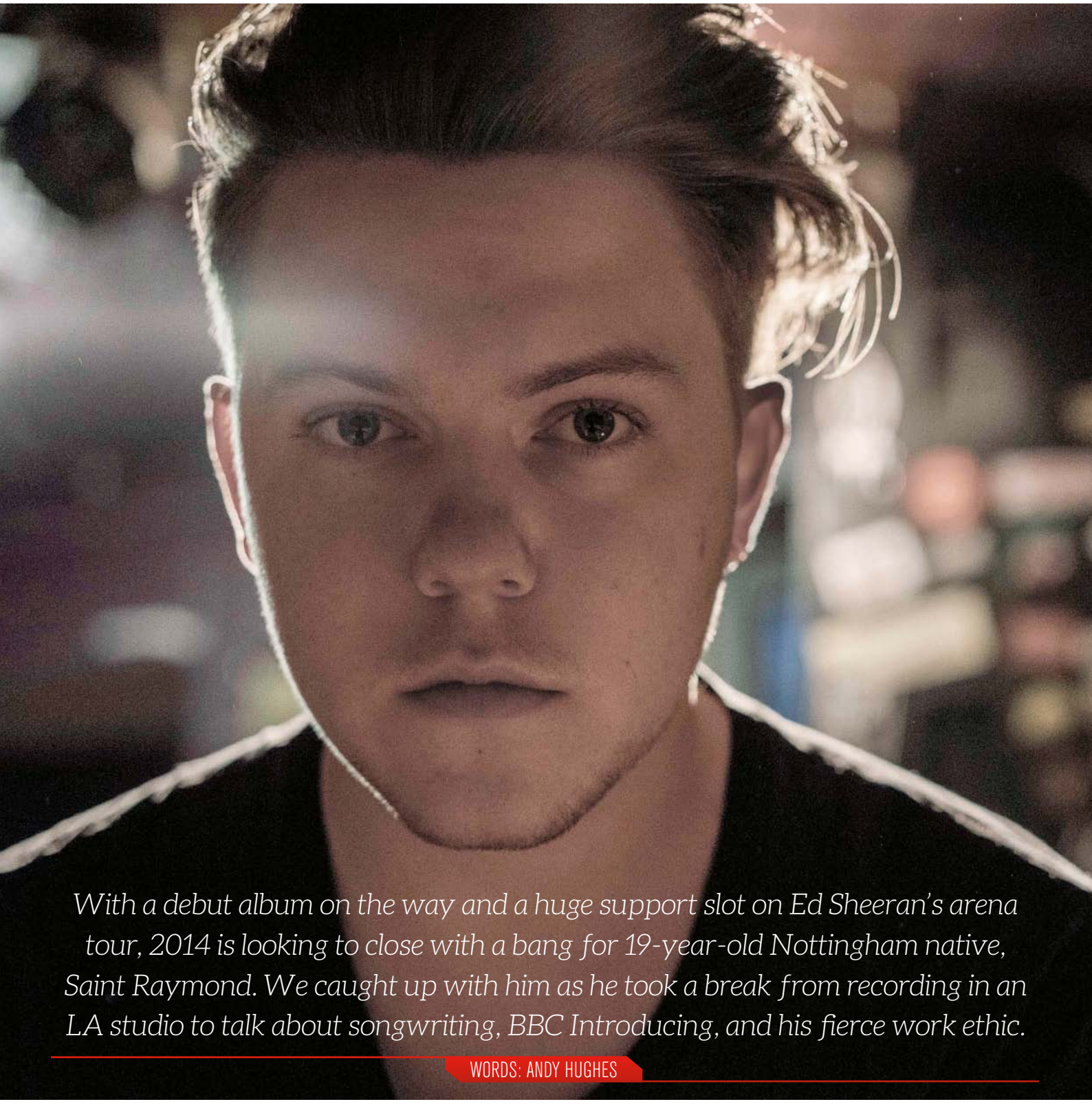
Ivor Mairants Musicentre

London's Premier Specialist Guitar Store

Stockists of Fine Guitars: Atkin, Brook, Collings, Eastman, Elysian, Larrivee, Lowden, Bourgeois, Moon, Santa Cruz, Veillette and Sergei de Jonge.

www.ivormairants.co.uk

56 Rathbone Place,
Off Oxford Street,
London W1T 1JT.
Tel: 0207 636 1481
E-mail: info@ivormairants.co.uk

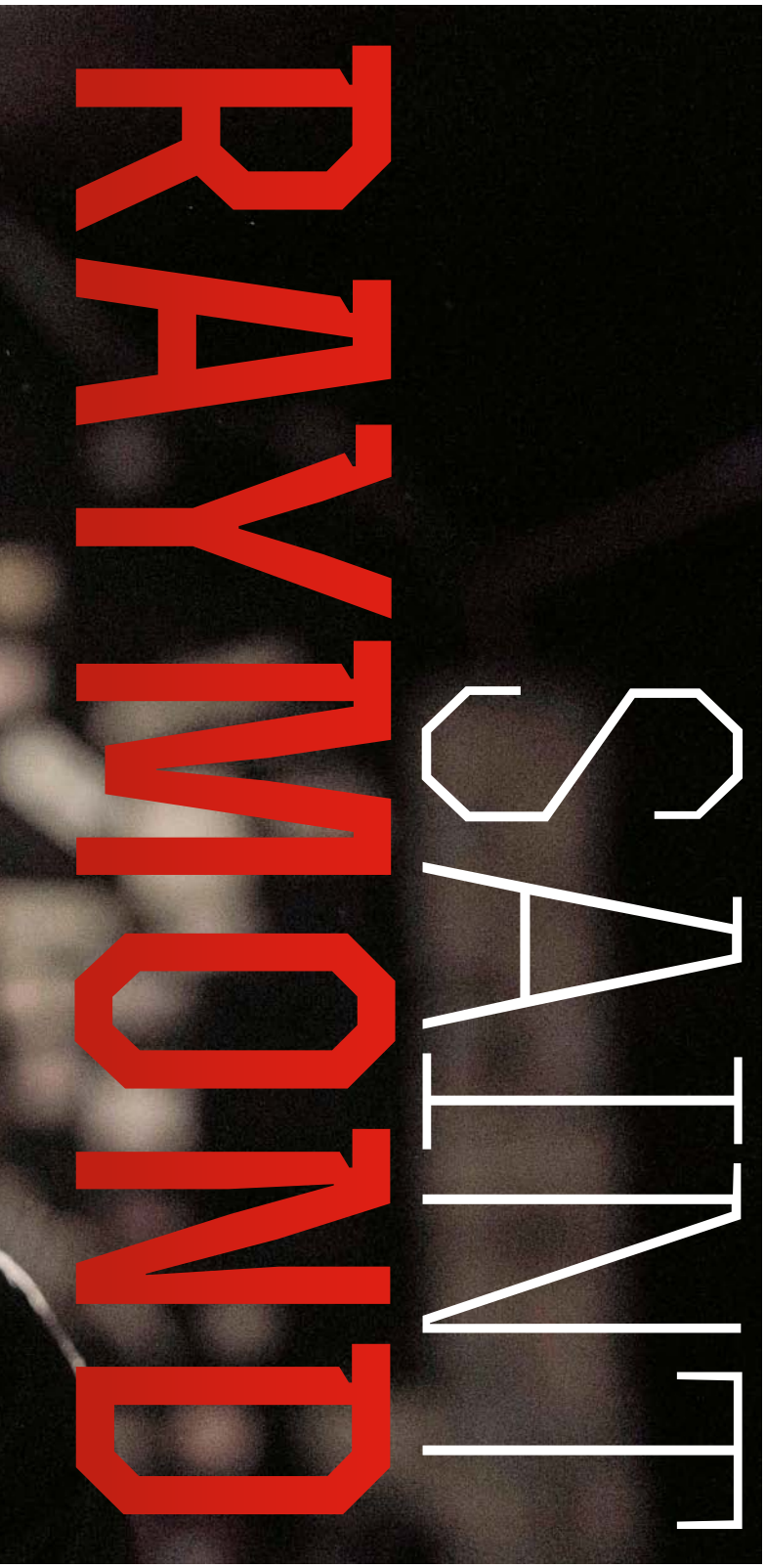


With a debut album on the way and a huge support slot on Ed Sheeran's arena tour, 2014 is looking to close with a bang for 19-year-old Nottingham native, Saint Raymond. We caught up with him as he took a break from recording in an LA studio to talk about songwriting, BBC Introducing, and his fierce work ethic.

WORDS: ANDY HUGHES

Saint Raymond (or Callum Burrows to the folks at home) is one of an increasing number of singer-songwriters who has enjoyed an almost meteoric rise to fame. People often say, "It takes 20 years to become an overnight success," but in Saint Raymond's case, it's taken only two. Burrows blends the lines between solo singer-songwriter and band, but all we need to know is he's Saint Raymond, and in those two years he's shot up the iTunes charts with his debut EP *Escapade* while his follow-up *Young Blood* received the "Zane Lowe treatment" on Radio 1. His third EP *Ghosts* was released back in May of this year.

The 19-year-old Nottingham native may draw comparisons to fellow guitar-wielding songwriter Jake Bugg (purely in that he's also around the same age, and from Nottingham), but he couldn't be farther from the that as Burrows has a love of blending acoustic guitar with synth vibes and funky rhythms reminiscent of 80s powerhouses such as Tears for Fears and the Police, with a bit of Vampire Weekend, Two Door Cinema



Club, and Friendly Fires thrown in for good measure.

Taking a short break from his recording sessions in LA where he's putting the finishing touches to his debut album and preparing for a huge tour supporting Ed Sheeran on his sold out arena tour in the autumn, Saint Raymond took some time to talk about his career and songwriting, starting off with the obvious question – who is Saint Raymond?

'Saint Raymond is me, but when I play live I do have a band. The name is partly based on a place name from back home, and Raymond was my granddad's name. When I started out, I was cautious of being chucked into a box as just another singer-songwriter – I really wanted to steer away from that, hence the change of name. When I started out, there were a lot of singer-songwriters coming up, and as I said, I didn't want to just be lumped in as one of them. When I first started out doing open mic sessions, I wanted the name so I would stand out a little bit; maybe get remembered a little bit more.'

'I grew up with music in the house because I had older brothers and sisters, and music was always playing. I did get into the guitar at quite a young age, then left it alone until I was about 14, and then I got seriously into playing, and listening to guitar music. From playing, it felt really natural to progress into songwriting. I never really intended to be a master guitarist. My intention in learning to play the guitar was always just to be able to play what I wanted to play. I think that made it easier for me when I was learning; I never wanted to reach a really high technical level, so I was never struggling to get there, I just wanted to be comfortable playing what I liked. When I write a song, I learn enough on the guitar to be able to play the song how I want it to sound, and that's enough – that's really all I need.'

One thing Saint Raymond has learned about the technological age, is that nothing gets forgotten, including an interview back in 2011 when he advised that he didn't want drums on his tracks. Now, his single 'Everything She Wants' has a full band on it – so was there a change of heart, perhaps?

'I think it was more a case of what was available to be when I started, as opposed to what is available to me now. When I first started gigging, it was just me and an acoustic guitar, and I never really envisaged myself playing with a band, or imagining how my songs would sound with drums and other instruments. I think that was the point I was trying to make. In the course of my career, I have had access to studios, and to other instruments, including drums, and musicians to play them, so I have been able to experiment with sounds and putting those instruments in with my songs. I always liked guitar bands like Oasis growing up, so it was always a matter of the opportunity and accessibility to try out sounds and see what I liked and what worked, and I've been lucky enough to have those opportunities. I think my style has developed naturally. I have never specifically chased a style, or a level of playing, so I think my style has just grown with my writing and playing without any conscious effort from me.'

Saint Raymond may still be a youngster – he won't pass his 20th birthday until next year – but he's already accomplished a huge amount; three EPs in one year with a debut album to follow.

'I never really had a specific plan or a timetable for releasing tracks, he says. 'Last May I put out my first EP. I hadn't released anything officially before then, and people seemed to like it, and the demand for some more music became apparent, so my thought was just to crack on with it and give people some more music, and not keep waiting around.'

The latest single 'I Want You' has amassed a lot of favourable radio airplay – garnering the support of some of the UK's most prominent figures across not just radio, but TV, too.

'The way that song happened is quite interesting. I was jamming around plotting some ideas, and then that came into what I was working on. I find that happens quite often when I write – I will get an idea, and when I am developing it, another idea for a different melody or a chorus will pop up, and that's

what happened with this song. It just happened. I played the BBC Introducing Stage at Glastonbury this year, and it was funny how that came about, too. I was at the festival with a friend, just hanging out and having a good time with friends, and I bumped into someone from my record label who told me that someone from the Introducing Stage crew was looking for someone to play, one of the planned acts had dropped out. So my label guy asked if I had my guitar with me, and I did, it was back at the campsite, so I went and got it, and played a slot on the BBC Introducing Stage. I didn't have time to feel nervous because it was all so last minute. But I was still thinking, this is Glastonbury, this is a musicians' shrine, and so many people would love to play here. So it was a bit of a bucket list moment. All my friends kept saying, "If you knew you were playing a secret set, why didn't you tell us?" And I had to keep saying, "Honestly, it was a secret even from me!"'

'There was a period of concentrated songwriting recently, for about 18 months, when I was writing almost continuously, so it is nice to get away from that and see some other places, and not have that intensity of writing for days on end. I feel now as though I can write because I have something to write about, and not just because I feel I ought to get some more songs completed. I have spoken to other musicians who have told me that they wrote their best songs for their albums the week before the album was finished, so I think there is no harm in continuing to write and see what comes in right up until we're finishing the album. When things are crazy, I obviously don't get much time to write, but when I get home and things are quiet, I find myself writing again without really thinking about it. I do know that if I haven't written anything for a while, I will then get the urge to write again. I guess all songwriters feel like that, because otherwise you would stop when things get busy, and just never go back to it and never write anything again. I do think that ideas subconsciously work away in the back of my mind, and when I do start to write again, the ones that are going to work will filter through and become solid ideas, and maybe the beginnings of some new songs.'

'I think it is so important these days that people don't just buy into the music of an artist they like, they get into the life and personality of the musicians as well, which comes to them through social media. I remember the morning that Ed Sheeran announced me as the support for his tour, and I think I gained 4,000 followers in about 10 minutes! My account actually froze for a while because it overloaded with the amount of people coming on to it. That is a modern high – the sign that you have "arrived" in the digital age.'

Not so long ago, Saint Raymond was a bedroom musician, recording his songs himself, releasing to YouTube, with as much a do-it-yourself approach as any, but he is now in a studio in LA – quite the turnaround. So does he miss the approach he began with?

'I am a bit torn between the two to be honest. When I tell people I am recording in LA, I think they naturally assume that I am living on Sunset Strip and I am living the LA life day and night, but it's not actually like that. We are based out of the city, it's up in the hills, and it's not a formal studio – it's a house. The drums are set up in the kitchen, for example. I think when you are in a custom built recording studio there is that pressure sometimes, that "red light syndrome". For me, it's a matter of finding that balance, which I think I have where I am recording now.

After a whirlwind last year, what advice would he give to musicians aspiring to his career trajectory?

'Definitely get yourself onto your local BBC Introducing programme with your BBC radio station. The BBC has been really proactive in promoting new music through local radio and it's a wonderful way to get your music out there. That was what started it off for me, I thought I would get some local support, but that is where BBC Radio 1 picked me up. Introducing is beginning to be a starting place for festival line-ups, radio playlists, and for me it all flowed from my start on Radio Nottingham. Right from the start, it's just been a case of getting on with it, sorting out the next thing to do. It's great because I haven't had time to get all analytical about it all, or for any nerves or doubts to creep in, there has been no time or space for any of that.'

Saint Raymond supports Ed Sheeran on his arena tour throughout the UK in October. His debut album is due out this autumn. www.saintraymond.co.uk

"*Elixir* HD Light Strings offer greater dynamic range and more space for subtle expression. They are intuitive and very rewarding to play."
- John Smith

Elixir® HD Light Strings

A new voice to love – for longer

- Bolder, stronger high end
- Fuller, warmer low end
- Balanced voice across all strings
- Ideal for narrow bodied guitars
- Comfortable, balanced hand feel
- .013, .017, .025, .032, .042, .053

Available in Phosphor Bronze and 80/20 Bronze, the new HD Light Strings deliver the extended tone life players expect from *Elixir* Strings.

www.elixirstrings.co.uk/hdlight

John Smith plays *Elixir* Strings HD Light Phosphor Bronze with NANOWEB® Coating, .013 - .053

Great Lakes, the new album by John Smith

facebook.com/elixirstrings

twitter.com/elixirstrings

youtube.com/elixirstringsmedia

GORE, ELIXIR, NANOWEB, POLYWEB, GREAT TONE · LONG LIFE, "e" icon, and other designs are trademarks of W. L. Gore & Associates. ©2014 W. L. Gore & Associates, Inc.

ELX-382-ADV-EN-JUN14

VANCE JOY

James Keogh, the Melbourne lad who records under the moniker Vance Joy, burst onto the scene with his folk-pop hit 'Riptide' last year making him one of the most popular new songwriters not just in Australia, but also in the UK. His debut album ***Dream Your Life Away*** *has just hit the shelves and he's due to follow with a sold out UK tour. We catch up with him about playing Maton acoustics, writing hits on his ukulele, and finding inspiration from the 70s.*

WORDS: ANDY HUGHES

Aussie songsmith Vance Joy – also known as James Keogh – has had a bit of a whirlwind 2014. Originally from Melbourne, Australia, he credits all of his success to his breakthrough single 'Riptide'. It is no surprise that he has swept the board with that single thanks to its summer infused sounds, and 70s folk influences. On the back of its worldwide chart success (and subsequently going triple platinum), Vance has sold out his UK tour dates, and was delighted to chat about his success, and the lead-up to it.

'Riptide' was first unleashed in 2013, but it had its beginnings six years ago, as Vance recalls. 'I did write the first few lines back 2008, and then left it alone and then came back to it back in 2012 and I put a chorus and a melody to it, and once I had those, the rest of it came quite easily – it was almost a stream of consciousness,' Joy recalls.

The elusive mystery of how a song appeals to the masses is something songwriters wonder about on a daily basis. Vance is no exception. 'I really don't know why so many people have taken to it,' he says with a little wonder. 'I think the strong melody may be something to do with it. When I listen to a song, I do pick up on a strong melody. I don't like too much padding, I like a strong melody line that kicks in early on and stays throughout the song. I had never done any proper recording before I did that song. I went into a studio in Melbourne with my drummer and a recording engineer and we just hammered it out in one day. Then we came back with a producer and he put some extra touches to it. There is something raw about it. We didn't use a click track, which is like a metronome that a lot of bands use to keep the time when they are playing, and because there's no click track, there is something imprecise about it – it was a unique recording on that day, the one that worked. The human metronome was working, I guess.'

Unusually, given that most people we talk to compose on guitar or piano, Vance actually wrote 'Riptide' on a ukulele, an instrument he has played since childhood, and one that's experiencing somewhat of a resurgence among players.

'I picked up a ukulele when I was about eight or nine, and what I have always liked about it, and found out almost straight away, was that it sent me into a different area in terms of playing. I didn't actually know what chords I was playing, which felt really liberating after playing the same chords over and over again on a guitar. I quite like singing with a ukulele as well, so I started bringing it out for a few songs when I played acoustic sets in cafés and places like that. The different direction I got when I started playing the ukulele was the same idea that John Lennon used when he switched from writing songs on guitar to writing songs on piano. One of the songs he wrote that way was 'Watching The Wheels'. I have always really loved that song, and the line about dreaming your life away, which resonated with me, and I borrowed it for the title of my album.'

'My dad is a very creative guy; he loves music, loves writing lyrics and so on, and I think he didn't really have a chance to

pursue music in the way he might have wanted. So, when I was 14, he bought me an electric guitar and told me I was having lessons in a couple of weeks,' Vance says of his introduction to music. 'I remember when I was learning piano in primary school, my teacher taught me 'Scarborough Fair', which I loved, and I wanted to learn that. The teacher told my parents that I didn't have much of an attention span for theory, but that if I heard a melody, then I would make sure that I could play it, and learn it off by heart. I think my dad saw that, and thought I would probably be a willing participant in learning music.'

'I don't think there was any pressure. I certainly didn't feel like that at the time, I think you learn to trust your parents to do the right thing. When I saw my friends playing instruments really well, that did spur me on to learning to play. When I started with the electric, it was a case of trying to feel cool; sling the guitar on, hit the distortion button and get into 'Smells Like Teen Spirit' – it was that kind of thing. There was always an electric guitar around in the house, and I was never really that much of a fan of electric guitarists specifically. The acoustic my dad had was one he bought when he was around 20 years old. It was a Martin copy made by Suzuki, but it's a really good guitar, it has a wonderful action. My dad knows I will take care of it, and it will be around for a long time.'

In common with a lot of budding musicians, Vance found his feet as a performer by turning up to open mic nights near his home. Opinions of open mic nights are divided into two distinct categories – those who think the whole thing is a total breeze and those who feel the experience is frankly terrifying.

'Definitely terrifying! No doubt about it, the thought of singing songs to complete strangers when you've only ever sung in your bedroom, and maybe to members of your family, is not an easy transition to make. I think if you roll up feeling cocky, then you don't care enough about what you are doing, and if you don't care enough, then you are not nervous enough – and that's never a good thing. I was nervous when I started out because I did care a lot. I had two songs that I was really proud of, and two more that I used to fill the space – you usually get to sing four songs. It was a real baptism of fire, playing to 10 people. It is a rite of passage, there comes a time when you just have to get out there and play your songs to strangers.'

And did those original songs make the cut onto your album, *Dream Your Life Away*? 'They did yes. I did my first open mic in 2010, and the song 'Wind Of Change' was a song I did then, and that is on the album, in a slightly different format. The other song was 'From Afar' which I used to sing back when I started, but I wrote an outro to it in 2012 which I think really lifted the song.'

Although his initial start into music may have been slightly different for Vance, his musical influences growing up certainly follow the standard pattern.

'It was the stuff my parents listened to, and what my dad played in the car when we were going to places. My dad had a Ben Folds album called *Whatever And Ever Amen* and a Paul Kelly CD – a singer-songwriter from Australia. And he liked the Police, and another band he liked was called the Whitlams. He enjoyed the Pogues too, and that was the sort of music he played in the car and in the house as well. That's the musical style I have always returned to.'

And so to today, when 'Riptide' has proved to be a massive success – making it to the number one single on Australia's go-to radio station, Triple J.

In a similar vein to BBC Radio 1's Live Lounge, when Vance appeared on Triple J he performed on original track and one cover, choosing Adele's 'Rolling In The Deep' which is not an easy vocal challenge to tackle. 'As I found out,' Vance confirms with a laugh. 'When artists go on Triple J, they like you to sing an original song and a cover. I have always loved Adele, and I have always loved that song, and I noticed that when a lot of musicians go on the show, they sing a cover of a song that is popular at that time, that is getting airplay, so I thought I'd be a bit different. It was something people would not expect me to do, which was another good reason for me to do it.'

So what guitars can we find Vance on tour with? Some instruments which share Vance's home turf... 'I am playing a Maton which is an Australian make of guitar. My dad bought it for me in 2007 and it's a very sturdy guitar. It's very good for touring because it has a good strong construction, I have been touring with it for the last two years, and it has just had a real pounding. I have a band with me on the road; I have been playing with a drummer, keys player and bass player since about 2012. When it comes to the arrangements, my drummer is really good at working out harmonies – I leave a lot of that side of things to him. When I bring a new song to the guys for us to work out and take on the road with us, I usually start playing and they will work out what is appropriate once they have developed a feel for the song. The more we play together the easier it becomes. If I introduce a new song to them, by the time they have jammed it for about half an hour, they will have got it down pretty much. We tend to do a lot of that working out and general rehearsals at soundchecks. On support tours, we often get quite a long soundcheck and we will try out new ideas, and sometimes we record them and work on ideas afterwards.'

Even though Vance's *Dream Your Life Away* has just been released in the UK, he seems to be always working out ideas, recording, and thinking of the next record. 'I am always chipping away here and there in terms of writing and recording. What would be nice would be maybe a month away from everything, to hang out with my family and go to to the beach and disengage from the whole touring and promotion and just see what sort of inspiration comes out of that. I've got a tour of America through October and November, and then back to Australia for Christmas and a chance to kick back with family and friends. We'll see what those experiences do in terms of prodding some song ideas into view.'

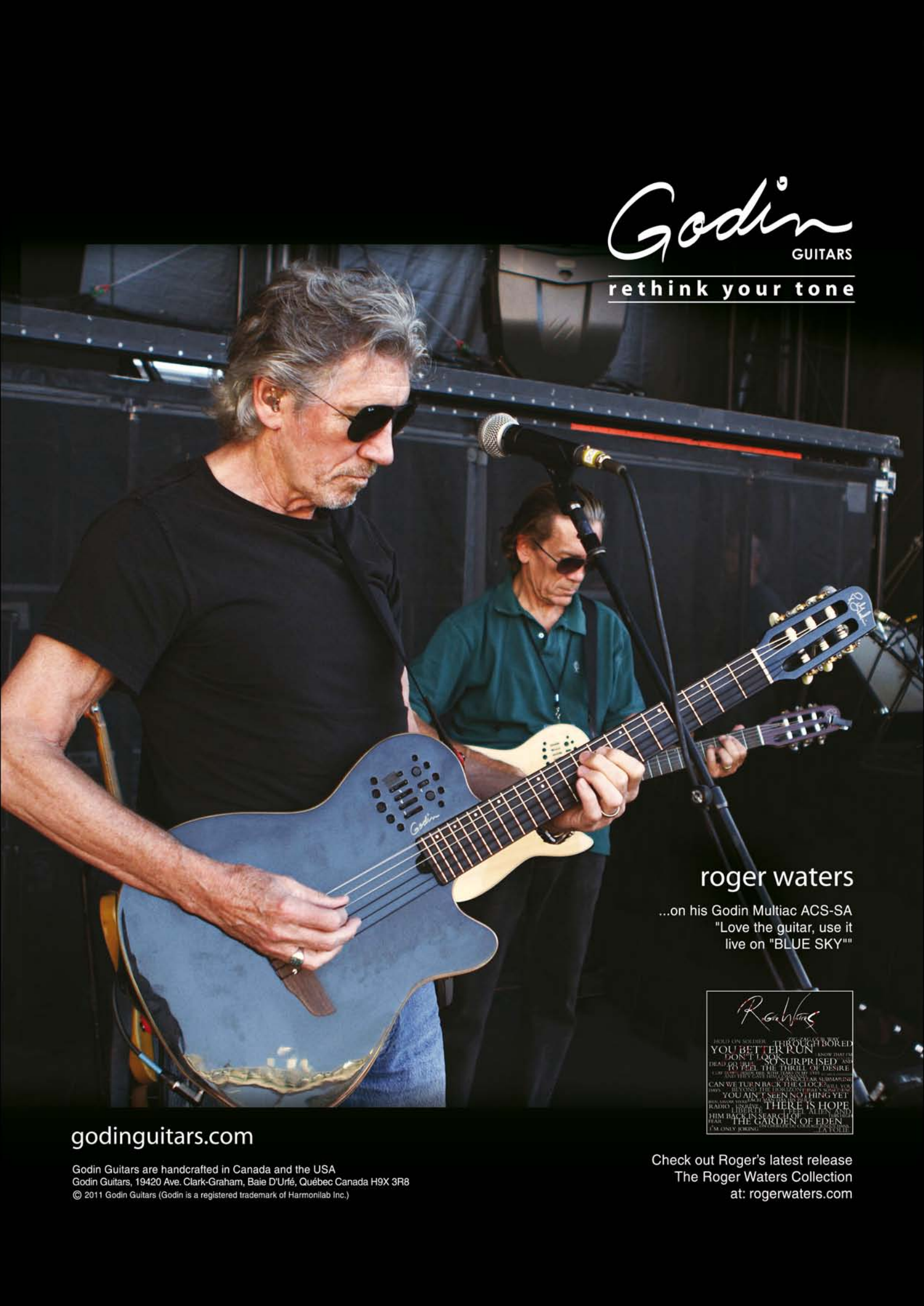
Before we finish, we can't let Vance go without asking him about his name. 'My name is actually James Keogh, and I have spent my lifetime correcting people who mispronounce it, the way to say it is "kee-oh" but so many people get it wrong. I like the name Vance Joy because it is simple and straightforward, and there's no danger of saying it wrong. It's not as though it's like I am acting a role, Vance Joy is not some sort of alternative identity, it is more a case of making an aspect of me when I am writing and playing music. When I was first starting out, I wanted to show people that I was really serious about making it as a songwriter and a gigging musician. So Vance Joy is a part of my character, but it's not all my character. It's a bit like putting a suit on to go to work. When I come, I can take off my suit and put a pair of jeans on and just relax.'

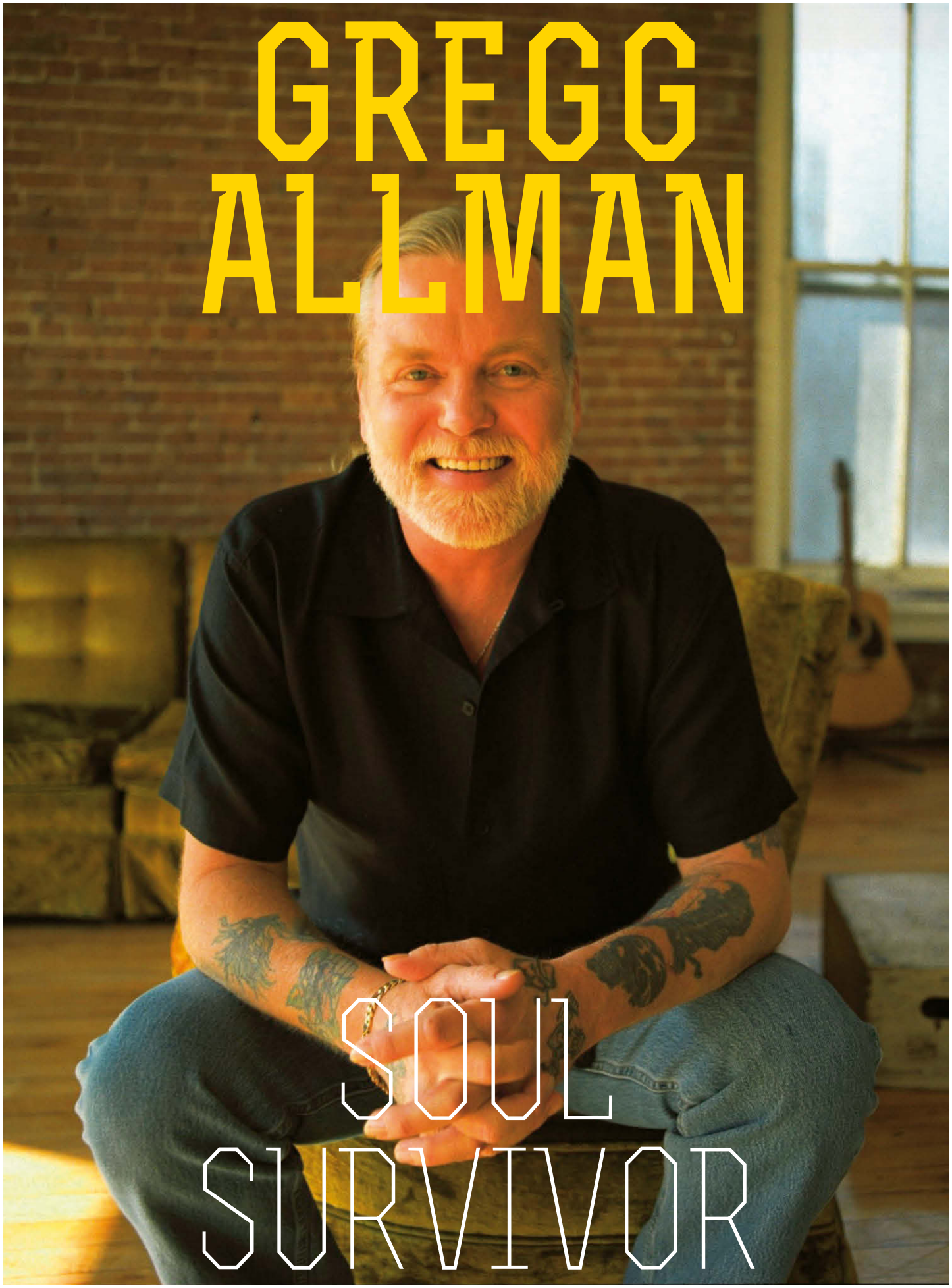
Vance Joy's* Dream Your Life Away *is out now. Vance tours the UK throughout September, and plays two dates at London's Shepherd's Bush Empire on October 2 & 3.
www.vancejoy.com

#seriousaboutguitars

Dave Mann Music

Ozark
NEW Ozark Guitars
· Designed and crafted for you to play - with sound and playability to the fore
· 3 new models: Solid cedar tops and beautiful koa back and sides with a powerful warm tone
· 5 new all solid models: Selected spruce tops and mahogany back and sides with Fishman™ transducer / EQ system
· Classic body shapes with great tone and impact
· Fine materials, fine workmanship, fine sound
· Email us for a brochure: ozark@stentor-music.com
www.stentor-music.com


Godin
GUITARS
rethink your tone
roger waters
...on his Godin Multiac ACS-SA
"Love the guitar, use it
live on "BLUE SKY""
godinguitars.com
Godin Guitars are handcrafted in Canada and the USA
Godin Guitars, 19420 Ave. Clark-Graham, Baie D'Urfé, Québec Canada H9X 3R8
© 2011 Godin Guitars (Godin is a registered trademark of Harmonilab Inc.)
Check out Roger's latest release
The Roger Waters Collection
at: rogerwaters.com



GREGG ALLMAN

SOUL SURVIVOR

The blues is the language of suffering, reckoning and redemption, and no other artist matches Gregg Allman in terms of communicating those universal conditions. His vocal range, passion, delivery and vitality transcend the southern rock mantel he helped birth via the Allman Brothers Band.

WORDS TERI SACCONE

Despite numerous tragedies, bouts with serious health issues, and the test of time, Gregg Allman remains a living legend as a singer, songwriter and instrumentalist. Allman's musical career has been spent largely behind a Hammond B3 organ, emitting an otherworldly soulfulness that helped make the Allman Brothers the quintessential, and possibly finest band to emerge from the southern United States in the late 1960s and early 70s.

Known for extended 30-minute jams and three-hour live shows, the Brothers have always excelled best in a live platform. But their high-wattage virtuosity is always balanced by Allman's grounded, organic creativity. It's a down-home southern appeal that shines through whatever he imbues – and even in conversation it's palpable.

Although Allman has maintained a long, intermittent solo career (his most recent album was 2011 album, *Low Country Blues* with producer T-Bone Burnett), it is his music as the singer in the band which he co founded with his late brother, guitar virtuoso Duane (see sidebar), that has primarily brought him worldwide adulation over the last 40 years.

Gregory LeNoir Allman was born on December 8, 1944, in Nashville Tennessee. It was Bobby Blue Bland, and Booker-T Jones who left a lasting impression on Gregg's musical formation. The magic of his songwriting is in the elegiac melodies, moving chord structures, and visceral lyrics.

Acoustic had plentiful reasons to interview Allman, but this year made our chat requisite as it marks two events: the release of *All My Friends: Celebrating the Songs & Voice of Gregg Allman* and the end of touring for the ABB. Although they've made only rare pilgrimages to the UK, in the USA and Canada the road has gone on forever as the band has toured for decades throughout North America.

In January 2014, an eclectic group of musicians from the worlds of rock, blues and country met up at Atlanta's historic Fox Theatre for an all-star performance to pay tribute to the life and music of Gregg Allman. That live musical event is what comprises the multi-media package *All My Friends: Celebrating the Songs & Voice of Gregg Allman*.

Among topics he discussed recently with *Acoustic*, Allman elaborated on the claim that the Allman Brothers Band will stop touring at the end of 2014.

'This is it – this is the end of it. 45 years is enough and I want to do something else, anyway. Everyone has their own real good respective bands,' he remarks.

However, he leaves the door open to possible reunions down the road. 'Who's to say? We may get together every five years and just do one play at a time,' he adds with remnants of a Southern drawl.

It's no secret that ABB veteran guitarists Warren Haynes and Derek Trucks will leave the group at the end of 2014. Allman will continue to tour with his recharged Gregg Allman & Friends project. Allman recently expanded his solo project to include a full horn section and long-time Allman Brothers Band percussionist Marc Quiñones. Keyboardist Ben Stivers and bassist Ron Johnson (Warren Haynes Band, Karl Denson's Tiny Universe) also recently joined the line-up so Gregg won't be relegated to the rest home anytime soon if he, or his fans, have any say in that.

Although everything one really needs to know about Gregg Allman is contained within his music, his 2012 autobiography *My Cross To Bear* comprehensively details his trials and triumphs in eloquent prose that not only tells his story in an absorbing manner, it also puts his music into a finer context as the book makes it clear that Gregg lived the blues from his childhood onwards. The tome dispels some of the romantic notions of life on the road and life within the band itself and is a compulsive, compelling read. *Acoustic* conversed with Allman at his home in the USA where he spoke with us after a recent health scare. His honesty and lack of spin is omnipresent, as is his wisdom.

You are regarded as one of the greatest living white male singers of the blues. You've lived ten lifetimes in the course of one. What is, if any, your one unfulfilled dream?

Well, thank you; that's very flattering, although I would rather simply be called a "blues singer" not a "white blues singer". That's because one of the things I really love about music is it is colour blind; if you can sing or play, your skin colour doesn't matter. Anyway, there are plenty of things I still want to do in my career. I know I have some great songs left in me, so I want to release an album made up of just my tunes. The credits will read, "All compositions by Gregory L. Allman." That's a dream of mine for sure.

Which of your several progeny have you connected the most with musically and why?

First off, I'm proud of all my children, and I can honestly say I didn't push any of them into a music career; if anything, I would have preferred that they went out and got real jobs with normal hours! That being said, my son Devon and I are the most connected musically. Devon and his band have toured a lot with me over the years, and there is no question that of all my kids, Devon's musical style comes closest to mine.

I think people may forget that you started out on guitar before switching to keyboards and a song like 'Come And Go Blues' illustrates the power of just you and an acoustic guitar. Even though you write much on piano what allure does the acoustic guitar hold for you in terms of it as a songwriting tool?
I owe that love of guitar partially to my grandmother and my brother; I discovered the six strings when I was about nine years old. I was visiting my grandmother in Nashville. The family had already moved down to Daytona Beach, Florida, where my mother had always wanted to go. My father was murdered when I was two and my brother was three, and she never remarried. She's still with us – she's down Daytona Beach, 93 years old, and in great health. She's been my steadfast backer, my strength; she's my favourite person in the whole world.

You have a fondness for open tunings when you have played or written with guitar...
I discovered open tunings by accident. We were in a hotel room one night, and I picked up Duane's acoustic guitar. I didn't know he had it tuned to open E; all I knew was once I started strumming it, all these beautiful chords just spilled out. Those chords eventually turned into 'Melissa' so I'm thankful to Duane for that, amongst many other things. After that, I really got into open tunings, and I studied the acoustic styles of other singer-songwriters – and people like Jackson Browne and Neil Young were huge influences on me. Eventually, I developed a style of my own; you mentioned 'Come And Go Blues' – that one was written in open G, and so was 'Midnight Rider'.

You originally played guitar and Duane sang – and then you guys switched.
Yeah, I played lead guitar and my brother sang. It just was not working out. I was no guitar player and he was no singer. So, time passes, and everybody we meet that was involved with a guitar attract each other – you know, "Hey man, what you doing, what you playing?" "Well man, I got this new record by Jimmy Reed".

And that got me, because that was just what Duane taught me, those three chords. So we'd trade off records and trade off licks. Life was good behind it too, because if you had a problem – you know how girls can be so fickle when you're that young – if you had heartache or if you had the blues about anything, when in doubt, play your guitar. You fill that hole. It was almost like a narcotic. It was a real healing thing, a temporary painkiller.

Similar to some of your musical contemporaries, you've had pernicious health issues plus invasive surgery (a 2010 liver transplant), struggles with addictions, and yet you've survived. As a recovering addict, do you have any healthier "addictions"?
The thing is, people talk about how I overcame drug addiction; well, it was just as important to me to stop drinking and smoking. The two legal habits – booze and cigarettes – are the biggest killers. As a singer, the worst thing you can do is smoke. I tell young singers all the time to quit smoking, or even better, to never start.

I know you can only speculate, but what do you think brother Duane would be doing had he not been taken away so young?
You know, one thing I think my brother would have gotten into was producing. He had such a keen sense of hearing; he just knew what sounded right, and how things should be played. I think he would have made a hell of a producer. He had already compiled an amazing body of sessions. Would he have remained a Brother or had a solo career? Do I think he'd have grown restless with the life of a vagabond musician? I can only wonder like all of us have done over the years about these questions. I'm sure my brother would have gone off and worked on other projects, and then come back to the Allman Brothers. He really enjoyed playing with other artists; part of that came from all the session work he did, but it mostly came from his love of music. He did 'Layla' with Eric Clapton, of course, but you know what project he was totally gassed about? When he did 'Push Push' with Herbie Mann, the flute player; he was really proud of what he did there. My brother always wanted to play jazz, and I'm sure he would have explored that, too.

"My whole life has been about perseverance. Career-wise, I didn't quit when it looked like we were never going to make it. My brother wouldn't let me quit..."

You just mentioned you had thoughts of quitting the ABB years ago...
Yeah. I mean, a couple of times I got really discouraged and thought, "Man, why don't I just go back to med school and just say it was fun while it lasted." Chalk it up to experience, you know? And I just couldn't quite bring myself to do it because I wanted to play. I tell you, I can actually answer that question in one word: passion. I had such a passion for playing, and I still do. If anything, it's gotten more and more serious.

Your latest release *All My Friends* is ridiculously tight in terms of musicality and performances (due in part to producer and musical director for this project Don Was). What was your standout moment?
I agree. Don Was put together a killer band, totally. Kenny Aronoff, Chuck Leavell, Jack Pearson; they were amazing, and Don was the perfect traffic cop on stage that night! There are just too many great moments to chose from, but Sam Moore doing 'Please Call Home' was stunning, and I came close to tears when I was doing 'Melissa' with

Jackson Browne. That night is a real highlight of my recent years, no doubt.

How did you feel when you were watching the footage from the *All My Friends* show?

The first thing comes to my mind is I said to myself, "Gregory, do not cry. Do not start crying!" If you watch the part with me and Jackson [Browne], we did 'These Days' and 'Melissa' and if you look at him during the second verse of 'Melissa' he was singing and he had a huge crocodile tear out of the outside of his eye and I was thinking, "Don't start, you'll get me goin'!" I just happened to look down at the first three or four rows, they were all crying. Everyone in that place. Then, the following Saturday night, with my new [solo] band, with my new horn players, we cut a live show at the Grand Opera House in Macon, Georgia, and it will come out sometime soon – and that band is smokin'. I've been building it for almost eight years and it is almost complete. It's a live record of my new band.

"I picked up Duane's acoustic guitar and didn't know it was in open E; all I knew was once I started strumming it, all these beautiful chords just spilled out..."

Besides Dwayne and Dickie (Betts), you've worked with other guitar giants Warren Haynes and Derek Trucks...

They are among the finest players. Over the years I've been blessed to work with some of the greatest guitarists in the world.

I should also mention the inclusion of Eric Church on the album *All My Friends*.

He sang 'Win Lose Or Draw.' He tore that up and on that project it's hard to say who did the best job of what. They were all so wonderful. That song, that was the last song that I wrote for the Brothers. We were not in a good way. Remember, after [1975's] *Win, Lose Or Draw*, we broke up. Before that, for [1973's] *Brothers And Sisters*, I showed them a song called 'Queen Of Hearts' and they flat turned it down. Their words were, I quote, "Man, it just ain't sayin' nothin'." I won't tell you who said it, because they're still alive.

I think we can probably figure it out... Likely ex-Allman guitarist Dickie Betts who was fired/quit in 2000 and with whom Allman had a combative relationship.

Anyway, that rejection is the best thing that could have ever happened to me, because I went ballistic. I said, "Do you remember me, I'm the fucker who brought you 'Whipping Post' and 'Midnight Rider,' shall I go on? A little more than three-quarters of all the rest of the songs. And you're gonna give me shit." I said, "Look, at worst, we can try it and have a killer laugh!" That's the way I look at things! And then we could say, "This is the worst piece of shit we have ever rung the bell on!" No big thing, back to the drawing board, right? But no... we didn't even try. So I got on the

first thing smoking to Miami, and thus was hatched *Laid Back*. It probably would have never happened had he not said that. I can't mention any names but his initials were Butch Trucks! Cut me to the bone, man. Some things take a long time to get rid of.

Back to *All My Friends*, any other highlights from the show?
I caught a little bit of Sam Moore doing 'Please Call Home,' [from 1970's *Idlewild South*] and man, oh my God. As he walked on the stage, I said, "Well, now we're about to get a lesson in how to sing that song right." Sure enough, he said, "I threw a little gospel in there, I hope you don't mind." I said, "Man, whatever you threw in there is fine." To have Sam, from Sam & Dave, to even have him come, just to attend... If he just came to watch the show, I would have been so elated. It also reaffirms something to me that is so valuable to me. That man is 84 years old, and he's just got chops! If, God willing, I make it to that age, I hope I can still sing and play.

So you guys are actually going to wind things down touring as the Allman Brothers in October at the Beacon Theatre in New York (the band had a long term annual residency there for years) that you postponed back in March?
Yes we are, in October – and we're adding some shows, so it will be a Friday and a Saturday, a Tuesday and a Wednesday, and another Friday and another Saturday. Two weekends, and two shows in the middle.

I read you have atrial fibrillation, so how are you doing now?
Yes, I've got an irregular heartbeat. I have what's called a "flutter" – it means my heart is just firing constantly, but I feel great right now and have lots of angels watching over me to have come this far. I feel great despite that stuff. I just need to start putting much more thought to my health. I've done juicing, I've gone to health food, I've even gone vegan, and it's not easy to find enough to eat sometimes but I keep on living this way.

You seem to be vigilant with your health now after living such a hedonistic life. You've had second chances so it seems – especially with respect to the liver transplant.
I'm happy to be alive and making music, and I'm touched and so grateful that I was given that second chance by someone who donated their liver so that I could live. I'm elated to be alive.

If you had to sum up the greatest lesson life has taught you, what would it be?
Perseverance – my whole life has been about perseverance. Career-wise, I didn't quit when it looked like the Allman Brothers Band was never going to make it. My brother wouldn't let me quit, and I'm glad we hung in there. Then I did it again in the 80s, when I played terrible gigs in the middle of nowhere for no one for no money. In my personal life, I persevered as well. All those times in rehab, and I would still slip back into the booze and drugs, but I never gave up on myself. Now I'm clean and sober and I'm still playing the music I love – what more could I ask?

The Allman Brothers Band's breakthrough 1971 live album At Fillmore East *has been expanded to a six-CD boxset* The 1971 Fillmore East Recordings, *out now. A tribute album* All My Friends: Celebrating the Songs & Voice of Gregg Allman *is also out now on Rounder Records.* ***www.allmanbrothersband.com***

DUANE ALLMAN
GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

Older brother of Greg, guitarist Duane "Skydog" Allman only finished two studio albums with his band, a legendary live album (*At Fillmore East*), played hundreds of shows with the Brothers and did session work in which he played behind other artists (*Layla and Other Assorted Love Songs* with Derek & the Dominoes is a stand-out). Despite the brevity of his career, Duane's playing brought him mythological status before his life was cut short in a motorcycle accident at age 24 in 1971. And the bulk of his reputation and legacy lives on despite the several top-calibre guitarists who followed him in the ABB.

Duane is a slide guitar wizard (employing the slide to imitate the sound of a blues harp), and he is also lauded for his dexterity and intensity as an electric guitarist of distinction. Perhaps Duane's quintessential slide performance is the Allmans' (from *At Fillmore East*) version of Blind Willie McTell's 'Statesboro Blues'.

And acoustic guitar lovers are cognisant that more than one classic ABB cut contained the beautiful strains of the jangly, undoubtedly Gibson, acoustic guitar, ('Midnight Rider' and 'Melissa', for example).

When asked about Duane's influence on him, Gregg is, as always, a straight-shooter: 'He was my musical mentor, he was a father figure, he was a brother, he was a whole lot of stuff.'

After his early death at the age of 24 (and then bassist Berry Oakley's death a year later) Gregg somehow continued the band. 'I just figured if we didn't... Well, after it happened, after we all got our shit together somewhat, we all met in Macon and everybody was saying, "What the hell are we going to do now?" I said, "Look, if we don't play, first of all this whole thing has been in vain. Second of all, we're going to wind up like junkies and drift on out, never to be heard from again and not mounting to anything." So it was pretty much a foregone conclusion.'

ACOUSTIC MAGAZINE PRIORITY RENEWAL FORM

SUBSCRIBE

TODAY AND GET A FREE GIFT

WHICH PACKAGE WOULD YOU LIKE?

97 (OFFICE USE ONLY)

☐ Please start my **NEW** Subscription to **Acoustic Magazine** from issue: ☐

☐ Please renew my **EXISTING** Subscription to **Acoustic Magazine**

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Please TICK the appropriate box below

SAVE OVER 60%

☐ UK: £40.25 ☐ Europe: £51 ☐ Rest of World: £71

YOUR DETAILS

Please complete in BLOCK CAPITALS. All information is private and will never be disclosed.

Mr/Mrs/Miss _____ Forename _____

Surname _____

Address _____

_____

County _____ Postcode _____

Daytime Phone _____ Mobile _____

Email Year of Birth

PAYMENT OPTIONS

1 ☐ **DIRECT DEBIT -** Get 13 issues, **Annual DD** £40.25

blaze PUBLISHING LTD

DIRECT Debit

Direct Debit Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit

Service User Number | 2 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 8 | 9 | Ref. No. (For official use only) |

Please fill in the form and send to: Blaze Publishing Ltd, Lawrence House, Morrell St, Leamington Spa, Warks. CV32 5SZ

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To the manager (Bank Name)

Address

Postcode

Account holder(s) name(s)

Branch sort code

Bank/Building Society account No.

INSTRUCTIONS TO YOUR BANK OR BUILDING SOCIETY. Please pay Blaze Publishing Ltd Direct Debits from the account detailed on this instruction, subject to safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that the instruction may remain with Blaze Publishing Ltd and if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank or Building Society.

Signature Date

Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions for some types of account.

CHEQUE/CREDIT CARD

2 ☐ I enclose my cheque for the above amount made payable to Blaze Publishing Ltd

3 ☐ Please charge my ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Maestro ☐ Delta with the above amount (Please no Amex)

Card number | Security code | START DATE | EXPIRY DATE

SIGNED TODAYS DATE

THE LONDON ACOUSTIC GUITAR SHOW 2014 ISSUE ALL THE ARTISTS & ALL THE GEAR
ACOUSTIC
www.acousticmagazine.com
The UK's only dedicated acoustic monthly. Only £4.95
GEORGE LOWDEN
ON CELEBRATING HIS 40TH ANNIVERSARY
GABRIELLE APLIN
FROM YOUTUBE TO NUMBER ONE
JON GOMM
DOING THINGS HIS WAY
"TAKING DRUGS WAS NEVER A BAD HABIT OF MINE..."

TUITION + INTERVIEWS + REVIEWS + WORKSHOP + 12-STRING CORNER + LEGENDS
ACOUSTIC
www.acousticmagazine.com
The UK's only dedicated acoustic monthly. Only £4.95
CASE HISTORY
INSIDE THE HISCOX WORKSHOP - THE WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS GUITAR CASES
GRANT NICHOLAS
FINDS COMFORT IN A DIFFERENT SOUND
NEIL YOUNG
RAGGED GLORY: THE JOURNEY THROUGH HIS PAST
SAM PALLADIO
TALKING TO THE STAR OF TV'S NASHVILLE

TUITION + INTERVIEWS + REVIEWS + WORKSHOP + 12-STRING CORNER + LEGENDS
ACOUSTIC
www.acousticmagazine.com
The UK's only dedicated acoustic monthly. Only £4.95
A NEW AGE
RELIC'D & REBORN
IS THE ATKIN WHITE RICE THE ULTIMATE DREADNOUGHT?
ETHAN JOHNS
AND HIS RECKONING
GREGG ALLMAN
SOUL SURVIVOR
VINCE GILL
RIDING A RIPTIDE OF SUCCESS
RICH ROBINSON
BLACK CROWES MAN GOES SOLO
GEAR ON TEST: ATKIN WHITE RICE, FAITH VENUS, VGS RT-100, GO PRO, BREEDLOVE CONCERT, ULTRASOUND CP-100

*Offer open to UK subscribers to print version only and while stocks last. Savings based on comparison against cover price (inc p&p) and gift RRP

RETURN TO: BLAZE PUBLISHING LTD Lawrence House, Morrell Street, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, CV32 5SZ

SUBSCRIBE TODAY

AND SAVE OVER 60%

PLUS GET A FREE ERNIE BALL®

BUNDLE PACK WORTH OVER £30

ALUMINUM BRONZE

Aluminum Bronze Acoustic Strings feature more projection and clarity than traditional bronze strings, while also providing improved corrosion resistance. Aluminum Bronze Acoustic Strings are made with Ernie Ball Maraging Steel hex cores and Aluminum Bronze wrap wire which provide more pronounced lows coupled with crisp brilliant highs. Made from a blend of copper and aluminum specifically tailored for acoustic guitar strings. Medium Gauge .013, .017, .026, .034, .046, and .056.

SUBSCRIPTION PACKAGE WORTH OVER £100

You pay just £40.25* Saving you over £60

GET AN EXTRA ISSUE WHEN YOU SUBSCRIBE BY DIRECT DEBIT

NOW AS A DIGITAL MAGAZINE TOO

ORDER ONLINE AT WWW.ACOUSTICMAGAZINE.COM

OR CALL OUR SUBSCRIPTION HOTLINE ON 01926 339808

*Offer open to UK subscribers to print version only and while stocks last. Savings based on comparison against cover price (inc p&p) and gift RRP

APP EXTRA
PRESS **PLAY** TO
HEAR THESE IN ACTION.

ATKIN WHITE RICE STANDARD & RELIC

Something old, something new – a pair of guitars that pay tribute to two legendary bluegrass players... **David Mead** takes his pick.

There's a fascinating story attached to these guitars. We'll cover the intricate details in our interview with maker Alister Atkin in a few pages' time, but I'll just skirt around the basic history behind these instruments before we look at them both in close-up detail.

The name "White Rice" came about because the guitars are modelled after the Martin D-28 that was once owned by Clarence White, a renowned bluegrass and country artist and at one time a member of the legendary Byrds. Sadly, Clarence passed away in a car accident in 1973, but his treasured Martin found its way into the hands of another famous player, Tony Rice – hence, "White Rice". Tony is a Grammy Award winning guitarist whose playing career reads like a who's who of country, having played with just about everyone including David Grisman, JD Crowe and even the Grateful Dead's Jerry Garcia. So, as you've probably guessed, if that original D-28 could talk, it would have a lot of tales to tell.

UK maker Alister Atkin decided to build a special tribute to the celebrated guitar and do it in two different guises: one, a pristine dreadnought, the other a painstakingly wrought relic that mimics as near as dammit the look of Clarence White's 1935 original Martin after its lifetime spent playing music.

WHITE RICE STANDARD

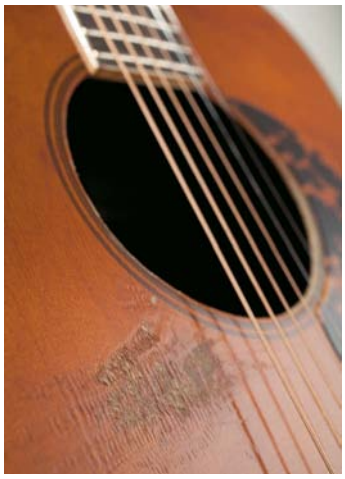
We'll begin with the non-relic version of the White Rice, which is clearly based around a pre-war Martin D-28. Clarence White's original is thought to be one of the best sounding – and loudest – D-28s in the business; in fact you might have already noticed the enlarged soundhole from the accompanying pictures. More on that later, but for now, let's take a closer look at the nature of the beast...

BUILD QUALITY AND FEATURES

There's a considerable wow factor when you open the White Rice's case. Martin's inimitable D-28 has become something of an iconic design in the acoustic guitar industry, with pre-war models reaching astronomical prices if one ever finds its way to an auction house or private sale. It's true to say that the dark amber colour to the top would be a lot paler if this guitar was fresh from the factory back in days of yore. But it manages to give you that impression that it's what Fender would refer to as "new old stock": in other words, it's brand new and aged to perfection.

The Atkin's top is Sitka spruce and peering through the stained nitrocellulose lacquer, looks to be a fine piece of tonewood. The original would almost certainly have been Adirondack spruce, but Alister has his reasons for switching materials and we go into those in the accompanying interview. Back and sides are Indian rosewood and the body binding is the familiar herringbone pattern. The story behind the enlarged soundhole is that it simply wore away on the original through years of hard use. Certainly other Clarence White models – both Martin themselves and Santa Cruz offer one in their respective catalogues – include this feature and it is thought that this factors highly in the guitar's reputation for being an extremely loud instrument. The soundhole is neatly finished on this non-relic model; it's different on the relic, but we'll address that later on.

The neck is a single piece of mahogany and doesn't feel like it has too much of that pre-war chubbiness, either. The headstock is slim, with Grover open backed tuners and vintage style butterbean knobs. It's rosewood for the White Rice's fingerboard, which is both position marker



free and with 21 frets as opposed to the modern D-28's 20. This is an unusual feature of the original Clarence White guitar, as is the overlap of the fretboard over the edge of the soundhole due, in part, to the aforesaid "wearing away".

ATKIN WHITE RICE RELIC

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Manufacturer: Atkin Guitars
Model: White Rice Relic
Retail Price: £3499
Body Size: Dreadnought
Made In: UK
Top: Sitka spruce
Back and Sides: Indian rosewood
Neck: Mahogany
Fingerboard: Rosewood
Frets: 21
Tuners: Grover
Nut Width: 45mm
Scale Length: 650mm
Strings Fitted: Ernie Ball Phosphor Bronze .012 - .052
Gig Bag/Case Included: Hiscox case

ACOUSTIC TEST RESULTS

Pros: A guitar which oozes character & charm
Cons: The price hike for a beaten up guitar might seem like folly to some
Overall: A loving recreation of a bygone instrument with a seriously virtuous tone!

ACOUSTIC RATING

Build Quality	★★★★½
Sound Quality	★★★★★
Value for Money	★★★★☆

5 Stars: Superb, almost faultless.
4 Stars: Excellent, hard to beat.
3 Stars: Good, covers all bases well.
2 or 1 Stars: Below average, poor.

CONTACT DETAILS

Atkin Guitars
www.atkinguitars.com

SOUNDS AND PLAYABILITY

Well, I was promised "loud" and I'm not disappointed! This version of the White Rice certainly is a feisty little beast in that respect; relatively well mannered when fingerpicked, but when you introduce it to a plectrum, bluegrass style, it really comes alive. If the enlarged soundhole has done anything for the sound it's accentuated the treble twang and tamed the dreadnought's natural tendency towards boomy lower midrange. That's not to say that there's anything lacking in the White Rice's bass register, there isn't. It's just that what's there is more uniform than I've come to expect from this particular body size.

Open string chords sound absolutely huge, making this guitar a real powerhouse for players wanting to explore the bluegrass style of playing. But personally I think that a lot of singer-songwriters would enjoy its sonic capabilities, too.

The tuners have been artificially discoloured on the worn headstock

WHITE RICE RELIC

On to the alternative White Rice, then. Alister says that there are people out there who just don't "get" the relic idea and would probably not understand why this distressed model costs £500 more than a "new" one, either – well, not until they think about the extra work that has to be involved, anyway.

BUILD QUALITY AND FEATURES

The basic template for ageing this guitar was drawn from photographs and video of the original Clarence White/Tony Rice model and also from a composite of pre-war Martins that have come through the Atkin workshop for repair in the past. You have to admit that this instrument looks like it has already spent a lifetime playing the bars and clubs of the bluegrass circuit, despite being fresh from the workbench. It even smells old.

Both Fender and Gibson have explored the relic route and it has proved to be very successful in both instances. There's something about a guitar that looks like it's been in a fight in that it's somehow imbued with a personality and vintage mojo all its own.

Needless to say, the inventory of building materials for the relic White Rice is practically the same as before. Only this time the Sitka spruce top displays signs of some pretty intense handling in its "virtual" long life. There are scuffs, chips and grooves, discolouration and scratches that would normally be a nightmare for any conscientious guitarist. But somehow here they just fit; you're aware that this is a tribute to an absolute workhorse of an instrument and that everything here is effectively a special effect, despite appearances.

There's also the wear and tear to the soundhole I

Open string chords sound absolutely huge, making it a real powerhouse

mentioned earlier. Alister has left this rough to the touch, as opposed to the rounded-off smoothness of the non-relic version and it works well against the backdrop of battle scars elsewhere on the guitar.

On the back of the guitar there are further signs of distress – no buckle rash, thankfully, but rubs in the lacquer that have left the wood underneath exposed and other seemingly ad lib knocks and scrapes, too.

If you've ever seen a genuine relic from the early part of the last century then you'll know what to expect from the back of the neck. More down-to-the-wood wear to the finish, especially in the region of the lower frets and a distinct nicotine stain to the ivoroid binding. The Grover tuners have been artificially discoloured and the front of the headstock is worn around the tuner capstans and abraded on the edges.

You can see the extent of the relic process in the pictures and doubtless some will prefer the "new" model, but I think this is a real work of art.

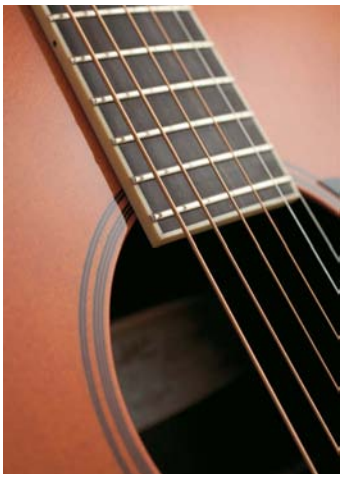
SOUNDS AND PLAYABILITY

Of course, it's comparatively easy to distress the finish of a guitar to make it look old – but making it sound old is another matter. Historically, the pre-war Martins are heralded as the definitive Golden Era, with the type of tonal sophistication that comes only with years of opening up and ageing.

So how does the sound of the White Rice relic fare? I suppose the most surprising thing is how different it sounds – and feels – to its unblemished counterpart. For a start, this guitar has a subtle V to the neck which explains the difference in feel. But the most outstanding thing is the subtle sweetness that has crept in to the sound; and whereas the non-relic was loud, I'll swear that this instrument is a few percent louder still. When subjected to the same plectrum test as before the guitar once again sprang to life – and I can totally endorse Alister's comment about this instrument being "an absolute cannon".

CONCLUSION

I should point out that both of these guitars are built to order and so the customer can have some say with regard to the extent of the relic process on the White Rice. Alister reckons that this particular example would probably rate around a nine on a 10 scale, for instance. But I suppose the main question here is which one would I choose? Both are excellent instruments and, seeing as the spec is almost identical, it really comes down to a question of aesthetics in the end. It did occur to me that while I had both guitar cases open in front of me, I kept picking up the relic. There's



just something vaguely mysterious and enchanting about this relic White Rice, and when you think about the amazing players that it pays tribute to, that's not too surprising, right?

David Mead

ATKIN WHITE RICE STANDARD

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Model: White Rice Standard
Retail Price: £2999
Body Size: Dreadnought
Made In: UK
Top: Sitka spruce
Back and Sides: Indian rosewood
Neck: Mahogany
Fingerboard: Rosewood
Frets: 21
Tuners: Grover
Nut Width: 43mm
Scale Length: 650mm
Strings Fitted: Ernie Ball Phosphor Bronze .012 - .052
Gig Bag/Case Included: Hiscox case

ACOUSTIC TEST RESULTS

Pros: An absolute powerhouse of a dreadnought!
Cons: Fingerstylists might want an even more pronounced bass response
Overall: An elegant, stylish tribute to two world class players that sounds as sweet as it looks

ACOUSTIC RATING

Build Quality	★★★★☆
Sound Quality	★★★★½
Value for Money	★★★★☆

5 Stars: Superb, almost faultless.
4 Stars: Excellent, hard to beat.
3 Stars: Good, covers all bases well.
2 or 1 Stars: Below average, poor.

CONTACT DETAILS

Atkin Guitars
www.atkinguitars.com

APP EXTRA
PRESS PLAY FOR ADDITIONAL VIDEO CONTENT.

AGED TO PERFECTION

David Mead talks to Alister Atkin about the process of ageing the White Rice relic guitar.

The "relic" is a concept in guitar building that has been around for a few years now. Companies like Fender and Gibson have both produced aged versions of their instruments, some of which have become highly sought-after limited editions. But relics are a bit of a Marmite subject for many; you've only got to eavesdrop in a couple of guitar forums to find a heated debate going on between the fans and the naysayers. However, the process is still comparatively unusual in acoustic instruments, but judging from the popularity of the White Rice, this is something that we could soon see change. There are a couple of mysteries about the original guitar - for instance, it appears to have a longer fretboard and 21 frets, whereas the standard D-28 has only 20: "As I understand it, the original fretboard is from a Gretsch," Alister tells us.

There's a video in the digital edition that features John Jorgenson, Herb Pederson and Jon Randall trying out the White Rice, which is particularly poignant seeing that Herb used to play with Clarence White and so is familiar with the original guitar. Were they able to shed any further light?
I've got more footage from that meeting and all three of those players are familiar with the actual guitar. Herb had played it back in the day and the other two had played it more recently and each of them had a different story to tell about what that guitar is. So I guess my feeling now is that it's all a little bit down to interpretation and folklore. I had a customer who sent me some pictures that he took of the original guitar when it was right in front of him and I don't think that it was a herringbone model. But some of the photos that I've got of it from a magazine in the States show that it didn't have herringbone. So that obviously wasn't Clarence's, unless Tony Rice has two of them and isn't taking the original out. I've grabbed information where I can and arrived at my own interpretation.

The original would have most likely had an Adirondack top and Brazilian rosewood back and sides as this was practically the norm with Martin guitars from the 1930s. The White Rice has a Sitka top – why the change?
I initially went straight to Sitka just to check the idea out, really. We build in Sitka most of the time with our standard range and our retrospective series, so it was the first thing that I had to hand. We have used Adirondack on these models for special orders and

so we have the capability of using it, but it's not as readily available as Sitka. As far as Brazilian rosewood is concerned, it's a difficult one to use and in some respects it's not really worth me telling anyone that we will make those guitars with Brazilian rosewood backs and sides. Firstly, it's all to do with whether we can get any at all and, secondly, if it comes with the right certification that makes it possible for us to sell to people who are going to be moving around the world.

So what are your thoughts on the relic process in general?
You're trying to build up layers of history, basically. We all know where the places are that guitars wear over time, but making them wear in the right way and imagining where that guitar might have been and what it might have gone through and how different owners might have treated it at different times is the thing. The original Clarence White D-28 is from the 1930s and so it could have had between one and 20 owners and each one would have done something different to it and that's what you're putting into the story.

How early in the building process does the ageing begin?
The relic process itself can take me a couple of months and will involve freezing at various different stages to get lacquer checking and things like that. But in general it starts really early on – at the beginning, almost. When we're making the top, sides and back there are certain things we will or will not do to replicate what a guitar from that period would look like now. So whether we glue the struts or work on the inside before we glue the body together, we're trying to make things look older than they are. We even try to recreate the smell of an old guitar and some of that is done with oils and various compounds that we've developed. The chances are that the guitar would have been in hundreds of bars and played in some pretty smokey, alcohol-fuelled situations and so that's a part of it as well. I'll light cigarettes inside them to mask the new smells and gradually build up this fug.

Then we might finish spraying it, do some wear, clean it up and spray on top of that, imagining that the guitar might have been refinished at some point, too. We're making something that doesn't need to have the same finish as a brand new guitar and looking for any slight imperfections that we can throw into the building process that will make it look more like an old guitar. There are so many ways of building the picture up, basically.

"We even try to recreate the smell of an old guitar – I'll light cigarettes inside them to mask the new smells and gradually build up this fug."

On our review guitar there are pick grooves above the soundhole. How do you do that?
For most of it we just sit down with the guitar and look at the original pictures to see where people didn't look after things and work away at it to try to build those blemishes in where the original had them. There's a way that lacquer falls off guitars: there's the "hitting it" method and then there's the "flaking off" method that happens over time once something has been blemished and so we try to achieve both of those. We might play the guitar heavily with a coin to get the process started and then try to chip the finish off or pull it up with something so that it's breaking away and it doesn't look like it's been hit.

The headstock looks really authentically aged on our review model, with worn edges and marks around the tuner capstans that simulate years of string changes...
We're very much trying to force damage on to it in the same way that we would all damage our guitars. Let's say that guitar had been on the road for 20 years and a roadie was taking the strings on and off every night and he didn't really care too much about how he did it. That's an easy thing to replicate; you've got a string winder and you're going to go for it! Then, you know when you've put a string on and it hasn't gone on right and the end of the string is dragging around the lacquer? You wind it around a few times and then look and think, "Bugger, look what I've done..." and so we imagine that it's happened loads of times over a period of 70 or 80 years and so we're going to do some of that, too.

I mention in the review that the binding on the fretboard has a nicotine-like stain to it – how did you do that?
That type of yellowing is common in those guitars and that is done by putting a tint on the lacquer when we spray the top – there's a tint in there to replicate the ageing process – but I don't mask up the bindings. So then I spray the bindings with the same stuff and rub it off, leaving some behind and then spray it with clear lacquer and rub it off again and gradually you get this kind of effect like it's gone nicotine yellow.

The tuners look old too and here the ageing process has to look authentic, but the tuners actually have to work afterwards.
We age those using various acids that we've found that work in "pickling" the plating and building up verdigris on the actual tuners. But we take them apart and remove parts from them first and that works really well. If anyone is doing this kind of thing at home, these days there are various people who have done some decent YouTube videos about how they do these things. There are some authorities on it and we've got a few in this country who have done work for guys like the Eagles, Graham Nash and all sorts of people, replicating guitars that they might perhaps own but not want to take out on the road any more.

Do you think that the original guitar's enlarged soundhole would have been down purely to wear and tear that has been tidied up at some point?
As I understand it that would have been the case and it would have been a way of cleaning it up to the inner ring [on the rosette] and making it look tidier. But, to be honest, it's a wonderful thing, the bigger soundhole. It definitely changes the tone of an instrument and we've certainly used it a lot on other instruments as well, when we've had the opportunity. It works great on an OM, for instance, and I think it's definitely a good thing to put into the mix when you're trying to achieve certain things. I'm a fan.

The neck profiling on the relic has a very authentic feel to it.
I've changed things again in that respect recently in that we've developed the V shape volute at the back of the headstock and so all the new guitars now have that on them as well, which is more in keeping with the original. We pay a lot of attention to detail when we're going for a proper vintage feel. There is something about the aura of a relic guitar that puts you in touch with the past and perhaps takes your playing to a different place, more than a new guitar would and that's what it should be all about. It's something I never thought I'd get involved with, but the first one I made someone just bought straight away and it's rolled on from there. We've done it with our J-45 models and Martin dreadnought replicas as well and we've ended up doing quite a few now.

For more information on the White Rice guitars, and Alister's other work, visit his website: ***www.atkinguitars.com***

PROMENADE MUSIC

01524 410 202
www.promenademusic.co.uk

6 String Acoustics

13028 - Atkin 'The Forty Three' J45
13027 - Atkin AA Deluxe Custom OOO FiguredWalnut
13022 - Atkin OO Am Special Parlour Guitar
13367 - Brook Lyn 12 Fret Handmade Guitar
13189 - Brook Tamar Medium Jumbo Handmade
13188 - Brook Taw OM Size Handmade Guitar
13366 - Brook Teign Dreadnought Handmade Guitar
13234 - Brook Torridge, Hand Made Guitar, Used
4612 - Dave King Katrina OOO Model, Sunburst
4613 - Dave King Louise, Koa, Parlour, Natural
4293 - Epiphone DR100 Dreadnought, Sunburst
12332 - Faith FKM Mercury
9533 - Faith FM Mercury Parlour Guitar
12331 - Faith FRMG Mars Drop Shoulder Dread.
10245 - Fender CD60 Acoustic Guitar, Mahogany
13213 - Gibson J185 Acoustic Guitar, Secondhand
7090 - K Yairi New Yorker NY0021BSB, Sunburst
7970 - LAG T300D Dreadnought, Satin Finish
12652 - Lakewood D14 Dreadnought Acoustic Guitar
9184 - Lakewood D18 Dreadnought, Natural
9183 - Lakewood D32 Acoustic Guitar, Natural
12649 - Lakewood M14 Grand Concert
12655 - Lakewood M18 Grand Concert Acoustic Guitar
13386 - Landola D85 Dreadnought Acoustic, Used
12257 - Levin LD30 Acoustic Guitar, Black
8308 - Levin SW203 Acoustic Guitar in Black
8310 - Levin SW203Acoustic Guitar in Natural
10905 - Martin 00018, Inc Hard Case
13064 - Martin D18 Dreadnought, Secondhand
6554 - Martin D18 Dreadnought, Natural
7115 - Martin LX1 Little Martin
6010 - Martin 00028EC Eric Clapton, Natural
9342 - Northwood M80 12
13133 - Ozark Grand Auditorium 3760 Deluxe, Used
10225 - Seagull Coastline S6 Folk Cedar Acoustic
11149 - Seagull Excursion Natural Folk SG
11148 - Seagull Excursion Natural Grand SG
10230 - Seagull S6 Original
13291 - Tanglewood TPEFLS
9587 - Tanglewood TSJ XFM Super Jumbo
7988 - Tanglewood TW133
9570 - Tanglewood TW40 DAN Dreadnought
13289 - Tanglewood TWJD Dreadnought Acoustic
4419 - Vintage V1100N Dreadnought, Natural
13081 - Vintage V2000MGG Acoustic Guitar
13268 - Vintage V300 Mahogany Series Acoustic
13269 - Vintage V400CSB, Cherry Sunburst
13270 - Vintage V400MP Maple Acoustic Guitar
10929 - Vintage VE2000DLX Gordon Giltrap
13272 - Vintage VJ100N XL Jumbo Series, Natural
13299 - Washburn R320SWRK, Secondhand
8304 - Westcoast SW201 Acoustic, Sunburst
10932 - Westcoast SW201 Acoustic Redburst
12437 - Yairi FY84 OM Folk Acoustic Guitar
12428 - Yairi Rag 65 Small Parlour Guitar
5632 - Yamaha F310 Dreadnought, Natural
9182 - Yamaha FG700MS Acoustic Guitar, Natural
6964 - Yamaha FG700S Acoustic Guitar
13387 - Yamaha FG720S Yamaha FG720S
13308 - Yamaha FG720S Dreadnought Brown Sburst
8019 - YAMAHA FG730S Electro Acoustic Guitar

6 String Electro Acoustics

8035 - Breedlove AJ250/SF Plus Electro Acoustic
10284 - Breedlove Cascade C25/CRE Electro
10285 - Breedlove Cascade OM/CRe Soft Cutaway
10287 - Breedlove Passport C250/COe Electro
10978 - Breedlove Passport C250CMe Electro, Nat
10292 - Breedlove Passport Plus C250/SBe Electro
10294 - Breedlove Retro D/ERe with LR Baggs
10976 - Breedlove Revival DSMe Electro Sunburst
10918 - Breedlove USA Gold D/SRE
10069 - Brian May Rhapsody Electro, Black
10068 - Brian May Rhapsody Electro, Cherry
10071 - Brian May Rhapsody Electro, Red
10070 - Brian May Rhapsody Electro, Sunburst
4769 - EKO Ranger EQ Vintage Series, Black
9179 - Epiphone Dave Navarro "Jane"
11134 - Epiphone PR4E Ltd Electro Acoustic Pack
10987 - Faith FECN Neptune Baby Jumbo Electro Bk
12358 - Faith FKV Venus Concert Cutaway/Electro
9543 - Faith FSCETB Saturn Dreadnought Electro
13216 - Faith Jupiter Jumbo, Secondhand
12360 - Fender Avril Lavigne Newporter E. Acoustic
10320 - Fender CD60CE Mahogany Electro Acoustic
12671 - Fender Tony Alva Sonoran SCE,
6142 - Gibson Hummingbird in Sunburst
13169 - Gibson LC1 Cascade, V. Sunburst, Used
10143 - Gibson LG2 American Eagle
10419 - Gibson Southern Jumbo Electro, Sunburst
4555 - Jimmy Moon Bryan Adams Signature
4554 - Jimmy Moon PF0003 Electro, Pau Ferro B&S
6948 - Jimmy Moon RD3, Electro, Natural
5602 - K Yairi WY1 Natural
9552 - LAG T300AE Electro Acoustic Guitar
9551 - Lag T300DCE Electro Acoustic Guitar
9547 - Lag T400DCE Dreadnought Electro Acoustic
9544 - Lag Tramontane T100ASCE, Black
12666 - Lakewood A14 CP

6 String Electro Acoustics

9186 - Lakewood D14CP Electro Acoustic, Natural
12674 - Lakewood J14 Baritone Jumbo Electro
12672 - Lakewood J14CP Jumbo Electro
12658 - Lakewood M14 CP
12678 - Lakewood M18 Grand Concert Electro
12679 - Lakewood Sungha Jung Signature Electro
5407 - Levin LS500CE, Small Electro, Blue
5406 - Levin LS600CE, Small Electro, Natural
8313 - Levin SW203-CETU Electro Acoustic Black
10933 - Levin SW203CETU Electro Acoustic Sburst
12696 - Maestro Raffles Flame Maple Cust Electro
12702 - Maestro Raffles IR-CSB Small Jumbo Electro
12790 - Maestro Raffles MDT Small Jumbo Electro
12789 - Maestro Raffles Monkey Pod Electro
12701 - Maestro Rosetta IR Dreadnought Electro
13211 - Maestro Rosetta IR Dreadnought Electro
12792 - Maestro Rosetta MDT Dreadnought Electro
12596 - Maestro Rosetta with fitted LR Baggs
12793 - Maestro Rosetta MRDT Dreadnought Electro
12791 - Maestro Rosetta SR Dreadnought Electro
13212 - Maestro Singa Flame Maple Custom Electro
12594 - Maestro Singa Handmade Electro Acoustic
12699 - Maestro Singa K-CSB-K Koa Jumbo Electro
13209 - Maestro Singa MRDT Medium Jumbo Electro
13207 - Maestro Victoria with fitted LR Baggs
13208 - Maestro Victoria with fitted LR Baggs
13055 - Maestro Victoria with fitted LR Baggs
12783 - Maestro Victoria MR OOO with LR Baggs
12225 - Martin & Co 000X1AE Electro Acoustic
12222 - Martin & Co DX1AE Electro Acoustic
8039 - Martin GPCPA4 Electro Acoustic, Natural
12439 - Northwood Custom Koa 80D Electro
12438 - Northwood Custom Myrtle 80 Series D/nought
11245 - Northwood M80-OM Electro Acoustic Guitar
4400 - Northwood R80, 000V Electro, Natural
6403 - Northwood R80, 0M Electro, Natural
11246 - Northwood R80-OO Electro Acoustic Guitar
12472 - Ovation 6868 Elite Standardm Secondhand
12552 - Ovation Applause AE128 in Natural
10034 - Ovation CC24 HB Celebrity Honey Burst
10031 - Ovation Pro Elite 2078AX
13364 - Pete Back Walnut Dreadnought, Used
10095 - RainSong BI-JM1000N2 Graphite Guitar
10094 - Rainsong S-DR1000 Graphite Guitar
10038 - Rainsong S-DR1000 Graphite Guitar
9820 - Rainsong CO-DR1000N2
9821 - Rainsong CO-JM1000N2
9819 - Rainsong CO-OM1000N2
9818 - Rainsong CO-WS1000N2
9814 - Rainsong DR1000 Graphite Guitar
10097 - Rainsong H-DR1100N2
10100 - Rainsong H-OM1000N2
10098 - Rainsong H-WS1000N2
9815 - Rainsong JM1000 Graphite Guitar
4812 - RainSong OM1000
10082 - RainSong P12 Parlor
10084 - RainSong P12 Parlor in Blue
10086 - RainSong P12 Parlor in Green
10085 - RainSong P12 Parlor in Pewter
10087 - RainSong P12 Parlor in Red
10088 - RainSong P14 Parlor
10091 - RainSong P14 Parlor in Blue
10092 - RainSong P14 Parlor in Green
10093 - RainSong P14 Parlor in Pewter
10089 - RainSong P14 Parlor in Red
9824 - Rainsong S-DR1000N2 Dreadnought Studio
9823 - Rainsong S-OM1000N2 OM Studio Electro
9822 - Rainsong S-WS1000N2 WS Studio Electro
9827 - RainSong SG Shorty Gloss Shorty Series
9828 - RainSong Shorty Fine Texture SFT Model
7974 - Rainsong WS1000 Graphite Guitar
5257 - Satori YD18EQ, Dreadnought Electro, Nat
5256 - Satori YD28EQ, Dreadnought Electro, Nat
8234 - Satori YD42EQ Electro Acoustic, Vint Nat
5255 - Satori YO28HEQ, OM Electro, Natural
12577 - Seagull Artist Mosaic Cutaway Folk Deluxe QII
12546 - Seagull Coastline Grand QI Electro Acoustic
9536 - Sigma 000MC 15E Electro Acoustic Guitar
12236 - Takamine EN20C Electro Acoustic
9602 - Tanglewood DBTSFCE Quilted Purple
13292 - Tanglewood TPESFCEAS
13293 - Tanglewood TPESFCEDS Electro Acoustic
13294 - Tanglewood TPESFCELS Electro Acoustic
13295 - Tanglewood TPESFCEZS Electro Acoustic
13287 - Tanglewood TVCXFM Electro Acoustic
12301 - Tanglewood TW15 CENS
4188 - Tanglewood TW40 DANE Dreadnought Electro
4187 - Tanglewood TW40 OANE Orchestra
8330 - Tanglewood TW40SD VSE in V. Sunburst
12669 - Tanglewood TW45 EG E Super Folk Cutaway
9607 - Tanglewood TW45-HSRE Electro Acoustic
7989 - Tanglewood TW47E
8293 - Tanglewood TW55NSB Electro Acoustic, Nat
12304 - Tanglewood TW73 VSE
12305 - Tanglewood TWJF E
13288 - Tanglewood TWJPE Parlour Electro
9200 - Tanglewood TWRTE Travel Guitar
12372 - Taylor 512CE Electro Acoustic, Used
8007 - Vintage Gordon Giltrap Signature
13082 - Vintage VE660VB Electro-Acoustic Guitar
13399 - Vintage VECJ100 Jumbo Acoustic Black
9535 - Walden CG570CE Electro Acoustic Guitar
10931 - Westcoast SW201 VT Electro, Sunburst
8307 - Westcoast SW201VT Electro Acoustic Black
8306 - Westcoast SW201-VT Electro Acoustic, Nat
13233 - Yamaha AC3M Electro Acoustic, Secondhand
8263 - Yamaha APX500 III Electro Acoustic, Nat
9189 - Yamaha APX500 III Electro Acoustic, Black
8018 - Yamaha APX700 Electro, Brown Sunburst
8020 - Yamaha CPX700, Tinted Finish
9191 - Yamaha FGX730SC Electro Acoustic, Nat
9192 - Yamaha FJX730SC Electro Acoustic, Black
8141 - Yamaha SLG110S Silent Steel String Guitar

Classical Guitars

13023 - Admira Almeria Classical Guitar
13026 - Admira Concerto Classical Guitar
13024 - Admira Espana Electro Classical Guitar
13025 - Admira Malaga Classical Guitar
13019 - Admira Sevilla Spanish Guitars
13021 - Admira Virtuoso Classical Guitar
0000 - Azahar - 3 Models in stock now
7365 - Jose Ferrer 3/4 Size Classical, Natural
13318 - LAG TN66A Classical Guitar
8584 - Mendieta Conservatoire A Classical
8507 - Mendieta Conservatoire C Classical
6779 - Mendieta Estudio P Classical Guitar
6778 - Mendieta Estudio R Classical Guitar
6777 - Mendieta Estudio S Classical
8240 - Mendieta Estudio T Classical Guitar
12238 - Mendieta Estudio VCE Electro Classical
8585 - Mendieta Professional Classica Guitar
5360 - Ramirez 125 Year Aniversary Classical
6029 - Ramirez 1NE Classical Guitar
6335 - Ramirez 2E Classical Guitar
6028 - Ramirez 4E Classical Guitar
5251 - Ramirez AE Classical Guitar
5644 - Ramirez George Harrison Model
6337 - Ramirez R1 Classical Guitar
6336 - Ramirez R2 Classical Guitar
8357 - Ramirez R4 Classical Guitar
6027 - Ramirez S1 Classical Guitar
12761 - Ramirez SP Classical Guitar
0000 - Roberto - 3 Models in stock now
9483 - Tanglewood DBT34 3/4 Classical Guitar
12302 - Tanglewood TCMR1 Classical Guitar
10999 - Westcoast Student 4/4 Classical, Red

12 Strings

6228 - Breedlove AC250/SM12 Concert Bodied
10280 - Breedlove Atlas AC250SM 12-String
12227 - Eko 12 String Guitar, Secondhand
9553 - Lag T200D12 12 String Acoustic Guitar
8322 - Levin SW206CETU 12 Strg Ele/Acoustic
9816 - Rainsong JM3000 Classic Series Electro
9817 - Rainsong WS3000 Classic Series Electro
10991 - Tanglewood TRD12 Lefty 12 Nat
12706 - Washburn D42S 12 12 String Guitar

Mandolin Family

8810 - Ashbury AM-11 Mandolin (Army and Navy)
8826 - Ashbury AM-325 Octave Mandola
8824 - Ashbury AM-370 Mandolin
13146 - Cort CMF100 Mandolin, Vintage Sunburst
12568 - Fender FM63S Acoustic Mandolin, Sunburst
12540 - Fender FM63SE Electro Acoustic Mandolin
10191 - Fender Mando-Strat Electric Mandolin
4551 - Jimmy Moon A Plus E Electro, Natural
9240 - Jimmy Moon A2 Acoustic Mandolin, Natural
4564 - Jimmy Moon A Plus Electro Bouzouki, Nat
4563 - Jimmy Moon Octave Mandolin (Mandola) Nat
4553 - Jimmy Moon Standard Mandolin
10196 - Maestro Electric Mandolin, Pre-Owned
12322 - Ortega RMA50VY Mandolin Vintage Yellow
10018 - Ozark Celtic Flatback Octave Mandola Nat
9430 - Ozark Flat Back Bouzouki
8315 - Westcoast M20 Mandolin Sunburst
12347 - Westcoast M20S Mandolin Sunburst
8316 - Westcoast M50E Electro Mandolin

Travel Guitars

13217 - Maestro IR3 CSB A Meridian Travel Guitar
5214 - Martin & Co LXM Little Martin, Natural
5835 - Martin Backpacker Acoustic Travel Guitar
13324 - Martin LX Red Little Martin
7115 - Martin LX1 Little Martin
7320 - Martin LX1E, Electro Travel Guitar
9588 - Tanglewood TW15 Baby All Solid Travel
9200 - Tanglewood TWRTE Travel Guitar
13271 - Vintage VTG100 Travel Guitar in Natural

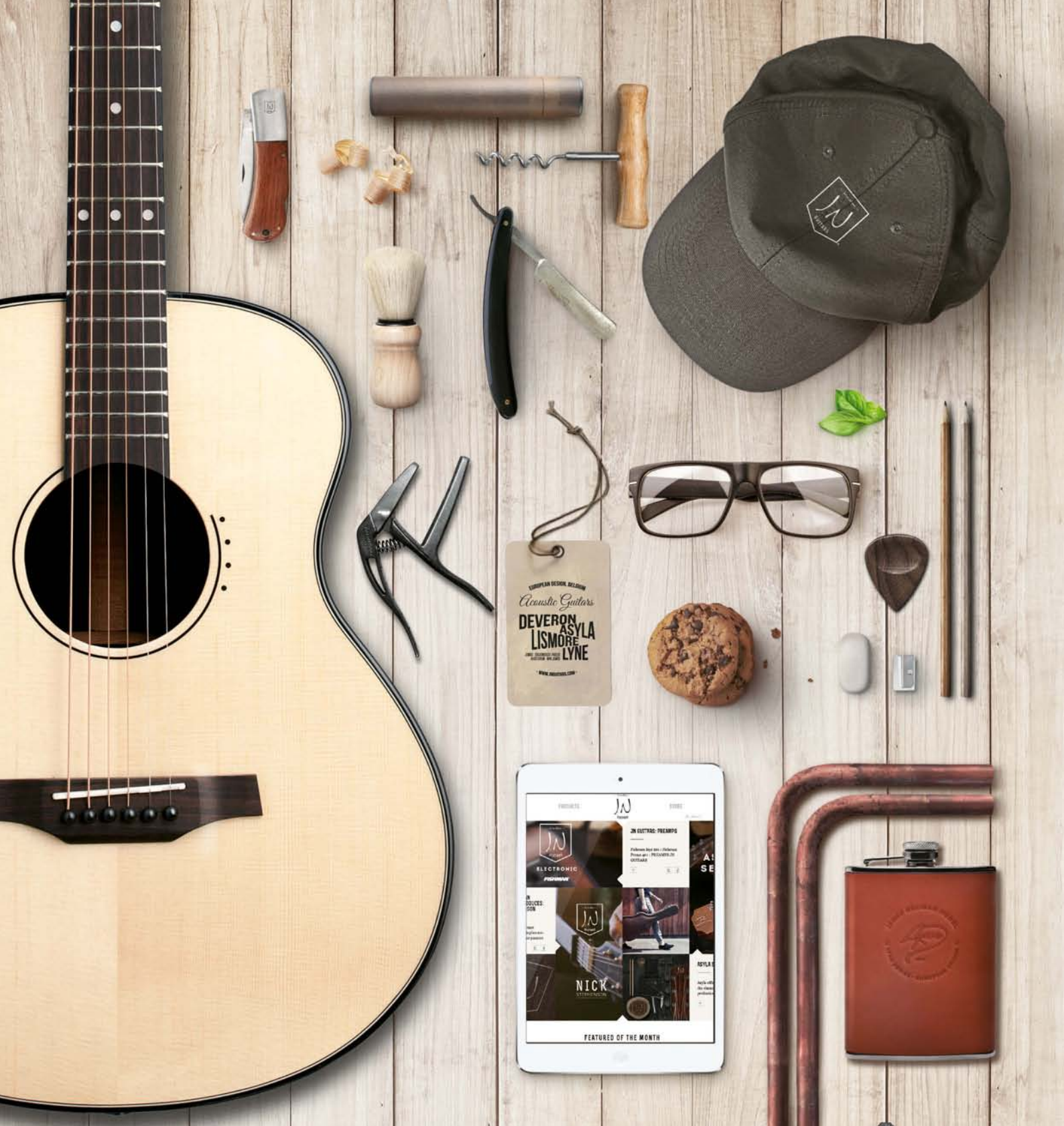
Ukuleles

12564 - Barnes & Mullins BJ306 6-String Banjo
4371 - Barnes & Mullins UBJ1 Banjo Ukulele
8209 - Delta Blue Ukulele Banjo
8208 - Delta Blue DUB2F Ukulele Banjo
12420 - Fender '52 Tele Shaped Ukulele
9080 - Fender UUku Soprano Ukulele
13065 - Iberica Concert Special Ukelele
13066 - Iberica Soprano Special Ukulele, Acacia
13067 - Iberica Soprano Special Ukulele, Walnut
12338 - Iuke Piccolo Standard Ukulele Inc Gigbag
9196 - Java TUJ1 Concert Ukulele
9709 - Kahana Soprano Ukulele Inc Bag, in Black
9708 - Kahana Soprano Ukulele Inc Bag, in Blue
9705 - Kahana Soprano Ukulele, Various Colours
9706 - Kahana Soprano Ukulele, Red
0000 - Kala - 7 Models in stock now
12285 - Lag U100C Concert Ukulele
13085 - Magic Fluke M10 Nat Fluke Concert Uke
10955 - Magic Fluke M20 Natural Fluke Tenor Uke
13086 - Magic Fluke M40 Mango Flea Concert Uke
10957 - Magic Fluke M80 Firefly Maple Ukulele Banjo
13084 - Magic Fluke M80 Maple Uke Banjo, Hwood
10958 - Magic Fluke M80 Walnut Uke Banjo
10956 - Magic Flute M30 Mango Flea Soprano Uke
5010 - Mahalo UTL1 Soprano Ukulele
9297 - Mahalo UTL1E, Vintage Sunburst
8515 - Ohana BK20 Baritone Ukulele
12610 - Ohana BK22 Baritone Ukulele
7101 - Ohana BK35 Baritone Ukulele
12609 - Ohana BKB35E Bass Ukulele
7102 - Ohana CK10S Concert Ukulele in Mahogany
12607 - Ohana CK15W Concert Ukulele
12605 - Ohana CK15Z Concert Ukulele
9050 - Ohana CK20CE Concert Uke
4466 - Ohana CK20S Concert Ukulele
8520 - Ohana CK35CE Electro Concert Ukulele
12603 - Ohana CK38 Concert Ukulele
8513 - Ohana CK50MG Concert Ukulele
8508 - Ohana PK10S Soprano Ukulele Pineapple
8509 - Ohana SK10CR Soprano Ukulele, Cherry Red
4712 - Ohana SK10S Soprano Ukulele
7099 - Ohana SK15BLK Soprano Ukulele in Black
7095 - Ohana SK15-RD Soprano Ukulele in Red
4711 - Ohana SK20S Soprano Ukulele Uke
8517 - Ohana SK22Z Sop Ukulele Zebrawood B&S
4710 - Ohana SK25 Soprano Ukulele
12183 - Ohana SK350G Soprano Ukulele
4715 - Ohana SK35G Solid Mahogany Gloss
9529 - Ohana SK50MG Soprano Ukulele
4714 - Ohana SK50WG Soprano Ukulele
7108 - Ohana SK70MG Soprano Ukulele
7106 - Ohana SK75 Soprano Ukulele
7107 - Ohana SK75R Soprano Ukulele
12608 - Ohana SKS15E Slim Electro Soprano Uke
4708 - Ohana TK10 Tenor Ukulele
4465 - Ohana TK20 Tenor Ukulele
12611 - Ohana TK38 Tenor Ukulele
12390 - Ohana Soprano Uke Gig Bag
13311 - Ohana Concert Uke Gig Bag
13312 - Ohana Tenor Uke Gig Bag
13310 - Ohana Baritone Uke Gig Bag
12310 - Ortega RU5 Concert Ukulele
5009 - Ozark Ukulele Banjo
12522 - Recording King RU998 Resonator Ukulele
12740 - ResoVille Weeki Wachee Resonator Ukulele
10376 - Risa CKK Concert Ukulele
10382 - Risa UKA SWS Soprano Ukulele
10383 - Risa UKA TKK Tenor Ukulele
9639 - Stagg USX SPA Soprano Uke Spalted Maple
10426 - Uluru III Tenor Ukulele
12189 - Uluru Koa II Concert Ukulele
10427 - Uluru Koa III Tenor Ukulele
13063 - Uluru KoholaConcert Ukulele
10424 - Uluru Lehua I Soprano Ukulele
10425 - Uluru II Concert Ukulele
10433 - Uluru Pukana LA IIC Cutaway Concert Uke
13033 - Vox Ukelectric 33 Ukulele, Blackburst

Acoustic Amplification

0000 - AER - 12 Models in stock now
0000 - Acus One - 9 Models in stock now
10496 - Fender Acoustasonic 15 Acoustic Amp
8166 - Fender Acoustasonic 150 Acoustic Combo
6149 - Fishman Loudbox Performer - 130W, 2x6.5
9232 - Fishman GII Pre-Amp DI
6150 - Fishman Loudbox 100, 100W
9166 - Loudbox Artist
4548 - Fishman Loudbox Mini - 60W, 1x6.5"
5286 - Fishman SA220 - 220w, 6x4"
9711 - Laney LA12C Acoustic Amp Combo
13282 - Markbass AC101 Acoustic Combo
0000 - Marshall - 2 Models in stock now
0000 - Peavey - 2 Models in stock now
4976 - Roland AC33 30W - 1x5"
9358 - Roland AC33, Rosewood
11129 - Roland AC40 Acoustic Chorus Guitar Amplifier
6505 - Roland AC60 Acoustic Amp - 30w, 2x6.5
9383 - Roland AC60 Acoustic Guitar Combo, RW
5597 - Roland AC90 - 90W, 2x8"
5574 - Roland Cube Street 2.5+2.5W, 6.5
13018 - Tanglewood T3 30W Acoustic Amplifier
8108 - Tanglewood T6, 60W
9522 - Vox AGA70 Acoustic Amp Combo
10937 - Yamaha THR5A Acoustic Amp

For full guitar details, pricing and photos, enter the number next to each guitar model into our SKU search facility on the website.



JAMES NELIGAN MODEL
LYNE SERIES · EUROPEAN DESIGN
Lyne
2014

PLAY FROM THE SOUL

In the whiskey distilling process, the "lyne arm" allows vapour to be converted into real spirit. That's the aim of the Lyne series of JN guitars; transforming what you have in your mind into real music!

All Lyne models feature a distinguished design, traditionally constructed with a gorgeous Engelmann solid spruce top and satin finish neck.

Combined with a rosewood back and sides, these guitars give an authentic sound to your soul!

WWW.JNGUITARS.COM

Join us on Facebook! www.facebook.com/jnguitars

Distributed exclusively by EMD Music - Unit 1 South Lodge Court - Ironsbottom - Reigate - Surrey - RH2 8QG - Tel 01293 862612

APP EXTRA
PRESS **PLAY** TO HEAR THIS IN ACTION.

FAITH PJE VENUS SPECIAL EDITION

The award-winning Faith range has a new special edition in the shape of an upgraded Venus... **David Mead** has the details.

A few issues ago, we looked at another Faith Patrick James Eggle signature acoustic which featured reclaimed Fenland bog oak for its back and sides and I have fond memories of the time that guitar and I spent together. This latest special edition features highly figured Macassar ebony and when Faith say "limited" they mean it as only 12 guitars are being built to this spec. The Faith signature series offers designer chic with down to earth price tags – let's see what this newcomer has to offer...

BUILD QUALITY

If you're familiar with the Faith guitar range in general, then you've probably already experienced the standard Venus auditorium and concert models. Typically featuring Sitka spruce tops and Indonesian mahogany backs and sides, the Venus has proven a real winner among the already award-laden Faith line. This special edition introduces some eye-catching upgrades in the wood department and promises a tonal adventure with classy bass and swooping trebles. Obviously the star of the show here is the highly figured Macassar ebony and so I took the opportunity to speak to Patrick James Eggle about this particular wood's sonic properties.

'We are very lucky in that our chaps in Indonesia have a limited, but very good, local supply of this incredible tonewood,' he told me. 'It produces guitars with an exceptionally rich tone and great depth. It is a very dense wood that is responsive to light picking, but if you dig in or strum hard, it won't top out or overdrive.' Indeed, Macassar ebony is pretty much a "local" Indonesian wood and shouldn't be confused with the highly controversial Madagascan variety. The rarity of the wood we see here is down to its elaborate grain patterning, and nothing more. The Venus's soundboard is high grade Engelmann spruce, which luthiers seem to agree as being a perfect pairing for the ebony back and sides. In fact, I've heard it referred to as being capable of producing a near perfect instrument, once all the woods open up and begin to breathe some tonal fire. Of course, at present, the spruce is still young and creamy white in colour, but a little further down the road this will turn to a richer honey-toned yellow.

On to the back and sides now and I hear that Macassar ebony varies enormously in terms of grain patterning. The most highly prized is a tan coloured base with dark stripes and is quite probably the type you would find only on the finest hand-built instruments. If you're not sure what I mean, just do a Google image search on the wood and stare in wonder. Here, the ebony has a darker background, but the figuring is still very live and prominent. The sides on this guitar feature highly contrasted stripes, whereas the back comprises a neatly bookmatched, wild and very attractive patterning.

The Venus's neck is Patrick Eggle's bolt-on design, a dark sand coloured mahogany three piece with a separate heel and a scarf joint towards the top. Grover tuners with ebony buttons adorn the familiar Faith headstock and, as is customary on these special editions, Patrick's signature is featured just above the truss rod cover.

There is an unbleached bone nut – from Bali, apparently – at the top of the fretboard, which features the same Macassar ebony that makes up the back and sides. Here, it's not so wildly figured, but if you hold it in a certain light you can see that it's not as featureless as it might at first appear. In fact, the lack of position markers, save for the Faith "F" at the 12th fret, really does lend the instrument an extra ounce or two of class.

The bridge is ebony, once

FAITH PJE VENUS SPECIAL EDITION

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Manufacturer: Faith
Model: Venus FSGV-EBY Patrick James Eggle Special Edition
Retail Price: £1,899
Body Size: Auditorium
Made In: Indonesia
Top: Engelmann spruce
Back and Sides: Macassar ebony
Neck: Mahogany
Fingerboard: Macassar ebony
Frets: 20
Tuners: Grover Rotomatic 18:1
Nut Width: 45mm
Scale Length: 650mm
Strings Fitted: D'Addario EXP .012 - .052
Gig Bag/Case Included: Hard case

ACOUSTIC TEST RESULTS

Pros: Quality woods and an award-winning design
Cons: I'd like to see a higher grade case for these specials
Overall: The combination of Englemann spruce and Macassar ebony is a winner and a great addition to the Faith catalogue!

ACOUSTIC RATING

Build Quality ★★★★½
Sound Quality ★★★★★
Value for Money ★★★★½

5 Stars: Superb, almost faultless.
4 Stars: Excellent, hard to beat.
3 Stars: Good, covers all bases well.
2 or 1 Stars: Below average, poor.

CONTACT DETAILS

Faith Guitars
www.faithguitars.com

The Macassar ebony has provided a significant upgrade in terms of tone

There's a superior quality of tone and playability – and at a great price, too

again, as are the bridge pins - the former from Macassar, the latter India – and the string saddle is unbleached Balinese bone once again.

I must say that the overall impression in terms of both design and execution here is one of a very finely crafted instrument – but what kind of voice does it have?

SOUND QUALITY

The Venus's neck feels quite broad in the hand, but not at all chunky. It's a 45mm nut, too, which always raises a quick cheer in these parts for its fingerstyle friendliness. I was wondering if the Macassar ebony would add extra weight to the body in the way that African Blackwood tends to. But if there is any, it's very slight with no undue upset to the lap balance that I could detect.

Faith say in their spec on this model that the ebony here produces crisp bass and lower mids with clear and brilliant highs and a slight midrange scoop. I have to agree, in that the bass is excellent and already has a hint of the maturity that will doubtless follow after a few months of playing in. The sustain is exceptional, too, with chords ringing on in a way that will delight fingerstylists who enjoy exploring alternative tunings – I tuned this guitar to DADGAD before playing a single note as I had a sort of premonition that this might be the case. Something just told me that it was that kind of instrument.

As far as any midrange scoop is concerned, it's certainly present and actually quite welcome as many acoustics tend to get a little gummy or boomy in that part of the sonic spectrum. The scoop has the effect of freeing up the basses a little more – almost like there's more of a marked delineation between lower trebles and the point where the bass begins to come through, so each has its own space.

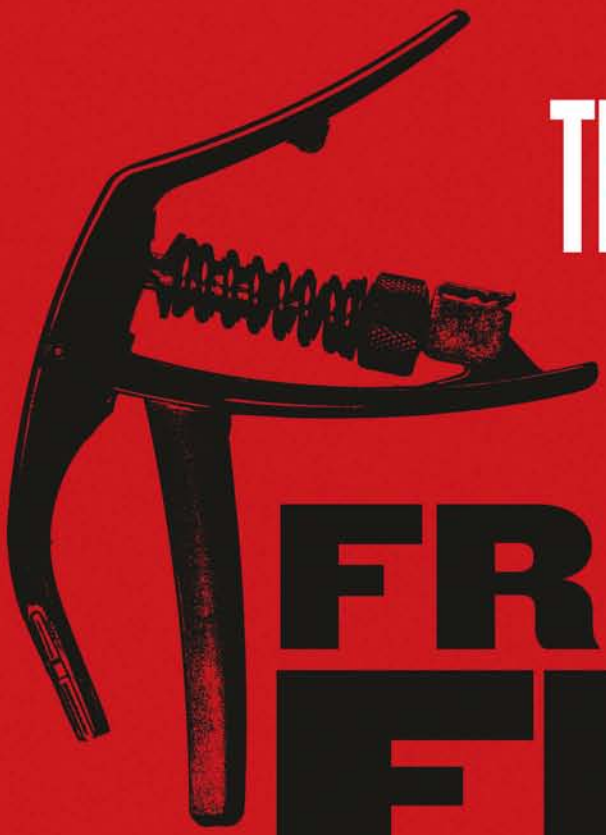
Single notes have the sort of "bloom" to them that you find on the finer rosewoods. If you've ever played an acoustic that sounded like it had its own built-in reverb unit, you'll know what I mean. It lends an extra level to the tonal goings on under the fingers, too.

The impression in terms of design and execution is of the highest calibre

CONCLUSION

As I said at the beginning of this review, I can remember enjoying the Faith bog oak special edition I looked at a while back and this guitar has found a similar place in my affections. The presence of the Macassar ebony has provided a significant upgrade in terms of tone as well as a touch of exotica to the aesthetic appeal. I don't doubt that you would be looking at a high sum if you went to a hand-builder with this spec in mind, but Faith's excellent facility in Indonesia has squared the circle to produce an instrument that exudes a superior quality of tone and playability while keeping the price tag low.

David Mead



THE NS ARTIST CAPO

FRET WITHOUT FEAR

FEATURING

& FRONT MOUNTED DESIGN

ADJUSTABLE TENSION MICROMETER

CONSISTENT IN-TUNE PERFORMANCE

YOU ARE NOW FREE TO PLAY

D'Addario
PLANETWAVES
daddario.com

#YEAROFTHECAPO

APP EXTRA
PRESS **PLAY** TO HEAR THIS IN ACTION.

VGS ROOTS SERIES RT-10

Yes, it's another budget instrument from a name you probably haven't heard of before. Should you stand up and take notice? **Alun Lower** finds out...

It has laminate mahogany back and sides

Budget guitar companies may be a dime a dozen these days, but that doesn't make the instruments any less important. For every experienced guitarist out there putting his pension fund towards a four-figure masterpiece, there are many more tentative first steps made into the wonderful world of the guitar – for that reason alone us guitar reviewers will always welcome new arrivals to the market and pick them to bits in an effort to find the best buys. VGS is a brand that many of us in the UK won't have come across before – but if you were to take a trip over to Frankfurt for Musikmesse – Europe's answer to the NAMM show – chances are you'll be noticing those initials emblazoned over some of the biggest stands in both the acoustic and electric halls. The company specialises in lower-end instruments, striving to bring together reliability and tone with quality construction and contemporary design.

BUILD QUALITY

The RT-10 is VGS's take on the humble dreadnought, sporting a vintage twist in the form of an aged sunburst finish and made in Germany. For a fraction over £200 you get a solid foundation of a solid spruce top partnered with laminate mahogany back and sides – not exactly breaking new ground but certainly a welcome addition in this price range that immediately puts this guitar on the same kind of level as an entry-level Sigma, which can only be a good thing. Woodwork appears to be of a good, tidy standard, with no blobs of glue to be found on the visible sections of the construction. Thankfully there's also a distinct lack of that hideous glue smell that has plagued a few budget instruments I've reviewed in the past.

A dovetail neck joint secures a mahogany neck to the body, topped with a rosewood fingerboard matched with the rosewood bridge to be found back down on the body. Fretwork seems to be in good order also – try as I might I couldn't find any sharp fret ends, and a decent finishing job means there is thankfully very little scratching noise when playing – a real pet peeve. Considering that I've been driven mad by scratchy frets on guitars costing over £800, that's pretty good going.

The guitar is finished gloss and has been pretty well applied for the price. Some guitars can feel like lollipops dipped in syrup with the amount of gunk that builds up around the neck in particular, but it seems that VGS's quality control standards are certainly up to par in this instance. The mahogany may be laminate but the finishing actually does a pretty good job of giving the natural-finish back and sides a decent appearance. The aged sunburst top is less to my tastes on a purely personal level, but I've certainly seen far worse on other guitars in this price range, so fans of the finish are likely to be perfectly satisfied by this guitar's smoky, understated hues.

Hardware is of a decent standard also, with the tuners feeling secure and smooth in operation and the bridge keeping the strings securely fastened in that well-made rosewood bridge. The whole package in truth really is very solid, certainly hitting the top end of what I would expect at this kind of price.

VGS ROOTS SERIES RT-10

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Manufacturer: VGS
Model: Root Series RT-10
Retail Price: £209
Body Size: Dreadnought
Made In: Germany
Top: Solid spruce
Back and Sides: Mahogany
Neck: Mahogany
Fingerboard: Rosewood
Frets: 20
Tuners: Chrome plated
Nut Width: 43mm
Scale Length: 650mm
Electronics: No
Strings Fitted: High quality USA-made
Gig Bag/Case Included: No

ACOUSTIC TEST RESULTS

Pros: No sloppy construction marks or glue spills that tend to find themselves on guitars in this price range
Cons: Not much for this price
Overall: A decent beginner's guitar that won't break the bank and that is actually very good

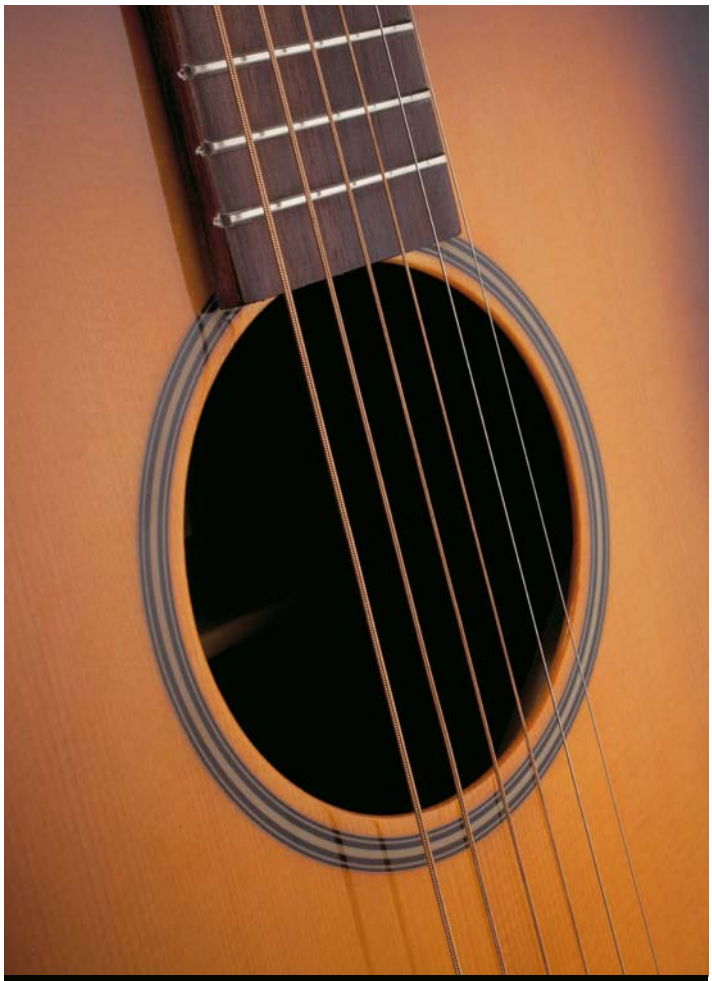
ACOUSTIC RATING

Build Quality	★★★★☆
Sound Quality	★★★★☆
Value for Money	★★★★☆

5 Stars: Superb, almost faultless.
4 Stars: Excellent, hard to beat.
3 Stars: Good, covers all bases well.
2 or 1 Stars: Below average, poor.

CONTACT DETAILS

Gewa Music
www.gewamusic.com



For a budget guitar, the woodwork is tidy with no internal sloppiness

The guitar is responsive to your attack and has a decent level of projection

SOUND QUALITY

A first strum of the RT-10 yields plenty of the ever-desirable dreadnought tone – thick and vibrant with a honky mid-range push and a clear low end, topped with a reasonable high-end response that might not sizzle and sparkle but certainly sounds well defined and clear. It's exactly what you should get from the average dreadnought and that's no bad thing.

Naturally, sustain is rather average and the harmonics you'd get from an all-solid instrument are nowhere to be found, but the laminate construction does lend the guitar a certain level of projection and strength of voice. The guitar is also nicely responsive to your attack – it does sound ever so slightly boxy if you take a particularly heavy-handed approach, but then again I'd argue the point that such qualities are actually very useful for a beginner looking to train their ear. It's also a quality that is shared by most guitars in this price range, so again can't really be labelled as a significant fault.

The RT-10 also serves well for beginners in the way that it can be used for so many different genres. It's a good testament to the quality of the setup that I was easily able to shift between strumming, fingerstyle and even slide with minimal fuss, even when changing to open tunings. Intonation and tuning stability are impressive across the board, and really there's very little to complain about.

It's a capable guitar that would make a fine addition to a beginner's collection

CONCLUSION

OK, so it might not take the budget guitar arena by storm, but the RT-10 really is a very capable guitar that would make a fine addition to the budget-conscious guitarist's ever-expanding collection or as a starting point for budding players looking for their first instrument. You don't get anything you can't find somewhere else, but there's no denying that what it does it gets absolutely right. Probably the most unique aspect of the guitar is its own particular mix of aesthetics, and in that area alone it's a guitar I'll remember for the right reasons. I've tested countless acoustics sitting at this price range in my time and I've seen a lot of (in my opinion) horrible sunbursts – this isn't one of them.

Overall, I can't help but feel quietly impressed by the RT-10 and VGS in general. The guitar itself ticks all the right boxes, and VGS has shown itself a capable builder that takes quality seriously. It's left me more than curious about trying out the rest of the range, and I would definitely recommend the guitar to anyone hovering around the £200 mark. Heck, you might be able to find it even cheaper – and in which case, all the better. Let's hope that the guitar-buying public agrees and that we start to see more of VGS on these shores in the near future.

Alun Lower

AMERICAN ROOTS

MADE IN EUROPE

VISIONS IN GUITARS

GEWA music

www.facebook.com/vgsguitars

www.vgs-guitars.com

Manufacturer: GEWA music GmbH | Oelsnitzer Str. 58 D-08626 Adorf | Tel. +49 (0) 37423 - 778 222 | E-Mail: info@gewamusic.com | www.gewamusic.com

GoPro HERO3+ BLACK MUSIC EDITION

A high definition video camera package aimed specifically at musicians – **David Mead** is our man with the clapperboard!

If you're anything like me then you probably associate GoPro cameras with those daredevil videos from extreme sports fanatics on YouTube – most notably Felix Baumgartner's truly hair raising jump from the edge of space. But the folks at GoPro have put together a special package together for musicians with a cunning range of mounts and myriad features contrived to give you cinema quality video from a device that's really, really tiny...

FEATURES

One of the more surprising and immediately noticeable features of the GoPro is its diminutive size. It really is about the size of a small box of matches, with vital statistics coming in at a mere 59mm x 41mm x 21mm – enough to elicit an "Is that it?" from practically everyone I showed it to, anyway. But these days the size of electronic gadgetry is no indication of what lies beneath the surface and the GoPro is no exception. Believe me, there is more packed into this little unit than I have space to list, but if we're going for the fundamentals, then it's a video camera that is capable of filming very high quality footage in almost any situation. In fact, when you think that this little item is most at home strapped to someone with a penchant for white water rafting or mountaineering, then it's going to take anything a musician can throw at it without leaving first gear.

Given that I'm holding a camera that can capture images that are of higher quality than either my HDTV or computer can show me, I'll concentrate my efforts by telling you how its magic can help the working musician – and a great deal of it resides in the mounts that GoPro provide in the package.

To begin with, there's a rather scary-looking clamp that will attach itself to a whole range of musical paraphernalia including cymbal stands, tables, shelving – you name it. There's

a very handy gooseneck that fits to the clamp to ensure that you can put the camera in all manner of whacky angles, too. Then there's the instrument mount; this comprises a plastic clip into which the camera fits that is then attached to your guitar via a specially designed adhesive strip. GoPro assure me that the adhesive strip will detach from your guitar without harming or marking the surface or finish in any way – but forgive me if I don't road test this particular facility for this review.

There's an attachment that will screw into the top of a mic stand – and GoPro have thought it through to the extent that they've provided both US and European adapters with the kit.

You get the idea; you attach the Hero3 to your guitar or something handily nearby and press "go" – but can it really that simple?

IN USE

Whereas I'm not really a technophobe as such, I am naturally cautious with any new gadgetry that enters my life. I don't go for the "suck it and see" approach either, favouring instead a quick perusal of the user manual followed by a period of quiet experimentation.

So I thought that a good acid test for the GoPro would be to see how many pages of the manual I would have to read before I could venture out into Bath city centre, find my friend Ben the busker and shoot a three or four minute video of him performing.

The answer is that it took ten pages in the manual, which isn't bad when you consider that most of that is taken up by the index and exploded diagrams. All you have to do is turn the unit on by pressing a button on the front, then press "record" on the top of the unit and you're instantly in go mode. Of course, this will mean that you're shooting your video using the default presets, but you're definitely going to pick up something. In effect, I altered the wide angle on the GoPro to a narrower setting because, being an f/2.8 lens, everything gets a bit fisheye if you're not too careful. In a sporting situation this possibly wouldn't be an issue, but I like the edges of my frames reasonably straight and not too distorted.

The menu in the tiny LED window gives you access to this and the whole range of shooting options and despite the small display, I was able to navigate it successfully and do what was needed without any undue hassle at all.

Off I went into town, shot some video and came home to see the results. One of the things that is slightly difficult to deal with if you're used to a conventional camera, is the fact that there's no view-finder on the GoPro. But it's really not that sort of camera; you really just point and shoot. There's a dedicated app that you can download that will connect to the GoPro's built-in wi-fi so that you can talk to it and see live pictures, if you need another few options, anyway.

The results of my initial effort were surprisingly good, even though I say it myself. Even using the built-in mic, the sound was really very presentable and I think that, with a few more experiments and a couple of settings tweaks, I would have something really serviceable. Factor in some good video editing software and I think I could have produced something seriously slick with almost no effort at all.

CONCLUSION

The GoPro Hero3+ is the absolute epitome of easy to use hardware. I didn't have time to explore its many other facets, but the quality I did witness was outstanding and I'm sure that anyone wanting to produce cinema quality video of their performance need look no further. At nearly £360 it's not cheap, but you certainly get what you pay for.

David Mead

GOPRO HERO3+ BLACK MUSIC EDITION

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Manufacturer: Go Pro
Model: Hero 3+ Music Edition
Retail Price: £359.99
Made In: China
Weight: 74g
Features: Automatic low light, ultra wide angle lens, fixed f/2.8 aperture, still photo capture, time lapse photo option, burst photo option up to 30 photos per second, built-in mic (48kHz AAC compression), built-in wi-fi, custom smart phone/tablet app remote compatibility – and much more!
Video modes: Wide range of video modes including 4k, 1440p, 1080p, 960p, 720p, etc., variable aspect ratio
Video format: H.264 codec, .mp4 format
Storage: MicroSD memory card up to 64GB
Inputs: 3.5mm stereo mic jack
Outputs: Mini USB, micro HDMI
System requirements: Mac OSX 10.5 and later / Microsoft Windows Vista 7 and later
Power source: Rechargeable lithium-ion battery (1180mAH)
Mounts: Mic stand mount, flex clamp, removable instrument mounts

ACOUSTIC TEST RESULTS

Pros: Compact, lightweight and really easy to use
Cons: The lack of a view-finder takes some getting used to!
Overall: Cinema quality video at the push of a button with no-nonsense operation and a multitude of features

ACOUSTIC RATING

Video Quality	✪✪✪✪✪
Build Quality	✪✪✪✪✪
Value for Money	✪✪✪✪✪

5 Stars: Superb, almost faultless.
4 Stars: Excellent, hard to beat.
3 Stars: Good, covers all bases well.
2 or 1 Stars: Below average, poor.

CONTACT DETAILS

www.gopro.com

BREEDLOVE PREMIER CONCERT ROSEWOOD

Breedlove's latest offering tugs on the heart (and purse) strings with a combination of clever tweaks to appeal to fingerstyle players. **Alun Lower** investigates...

I'll make no bones about it – fingerstyle is my absolute favourite way to play the acoustic guitar. There's something about the response you get from your changes in attack that just sings to my ears better than any plectrum could. The best fingerstyle acoustics in my mind have a broad palette of tones coupled with exceptional clarity and detailed harmonics with the exact purpose of enhancing that attack and rewarding the player for every note and phrase. Breedlove clearly has a fondness for this as well and have produced a number of excellent guitars over the years geared towards giving the fingerstyle guitarist the ultimate playing experience. This extensive research and experience has now culminated in the Premier Concert Rosewood – a guitar that on the face of things is relatively simple but tries to squeeze some subtle innovations into the mix.

BUILD QUALITY

On first inspection, the PCR (as I will refer to it from here on) is everything you would expect from a typical Breedlove guitar. The slender outline of their concert body shape is as distinctive as ever thanks to that performance-oriented cutaway, enhanced further by the cut of the headstock, lending the PCR a modern aesthetic that anyone familiar with Breedlove will recognise straight away. It's a great look and is one of the company's most refreshing qualities.

Tonewood selection doesn't get much more straightforward than a Sitka spruce top perched on rosewood back and sides – it's the foundation of many a wonderful guitar and an encouraging starting point here too. In this instance, the spruce has also been given a slightly darker, aged look that contrasts nicely with the modern aesthetic and grounds the design for those with a more traditional leaning. Decoration elsewhere is relatively minimal, with some relatively retrained use of abalone surrounding the soundhole and also decorating the fingerboard with a nice two-circle effect on the dot markers, which have also been placed in slightly more modern positions than tradition would dictate. The sumptuously dark ebony fingerboard rests upon a sapele neck, and holds 21 immaculately fitted and finished frets for a smooth playing experience. The nut measures in at 1-3/4", meaning a slightly wider profile that should give fingerstyle guitarists a bit more room to breathe – even more so when combined with a thinner neck profile.

One of Breedlove's most ingenious engineering feats sits inconspicuously under the top – the bridge truss. In layman's terms, a truss rod purely for the bridge, the system is intended to reinforce the bridge, therefore easing string tension and as a result, the pressure on the top itself. This allows Breedlove to incorporate other, equally subtle touches – such as a graduated top thickness and more unusual bracing patterns. Breedlove say this is the secret behind their famously balanced sound – we'll come to that later, but for the time being from a buyer's point of view it's a great feeling to know that your prized instrument has been so expertly crafted. Last but not least, the PCR also comes equipped with the Fishman Ultra-Tone electronics package, a pickup-based system with a discreet volume/tone preamp and battery pack nestled on the underside of the top with access from the soundhole. It's a simplistic system that keeps the emphasis on the guitar's acoustic qualities but also highlights Breedlove's commitment to creating the ultimate performance guitars.

APP EXTRA
PRESS PLAY TO HEAR THIS IN ACTION.

BREEDLOVE
PREMIER CONCERT ROSEWOOD

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Manufacturer: Breedlove
Model: Premier Concert Rosewood
Retail Price: £2,299
Body Size: Concert
Made In: USA
Top: Sitka spruce
Back and Sides: East Indian rosewood
Neck: Sapele
Fingerboard: Ebony
Frets: 21
Tuners: Nickel Breedlove
Nut Width: 1 ¾"
Scale Length: 650mm
Electronics: Fishman Ultra-Tone
Strings Fitted: D'Addario EXP 16
Gig Bag/Case Included: Hard case

ACOUSTIC TEST RESULTS

Pros: Modern aesthetics, Fishman Ultra-Tone, and a lovely hard case included
Cons: Some people will undoubtedly find this a little pricey
Overall: A great performance ready guitars with an exceptionally balanced tone

ACOUSTIC RATING

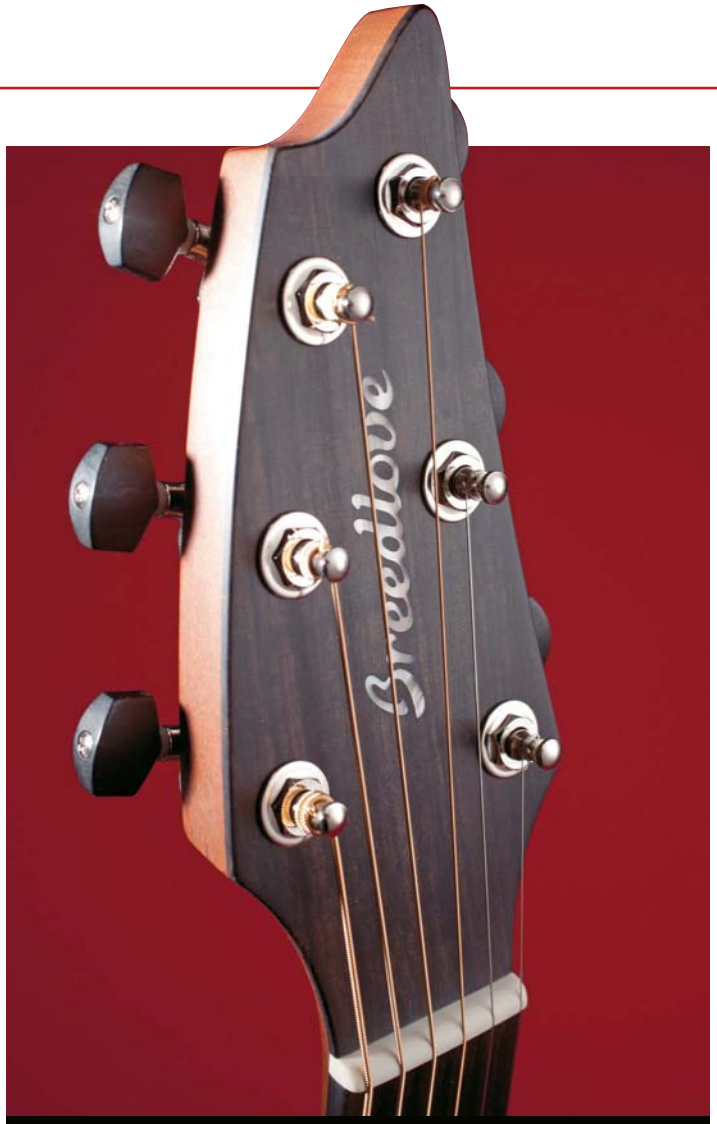
Build Quality	★★★★☆
Sound Quality	★★★★☆
Value for Money	★★★★☆

5 Stars: Superb, almost faultless.
4 Stars: Excellent, hard to beat.
3 Stars: Good, covers all bases well.
2 or 1 Stars: Below average, poor.

CONTACT DETAILS

Rosetti
www.rosetti.co.uk

The Breedlove should be on every serious guitar player's shopping list



Sustain, harmonics and all-round playability on offer are absolutely superb

SOUND QUALITY

As I mentioned earlier, Breedlove is renowned for making performance-oriented guitars with an exceptionally balanced tone – and that's exactly what you get here. The rosewood and spruce combo as ever produce an overall voice that has plenty of clarity on the low end with added zing on the highs when you want it. Compared to a mahogany instrument there's not so much of a mid-range presence, but that's to be expected. The all-important responsiveness of a fingerstyle guitar is there in droves, with every movement and nuance translated into musical delight.

The Breedlove Concert body shape is by far the company's most popular and it's easy to see why – not only is it easy to wield physically but it also tames the highs and lows respectively to keep the tone sitting somewhere in the middle. And therein lies the problem for some guitarists – if anything, the tone could be considered a little flat. Clarity, sustain and harmonics are absolutely superb, don't get me wrong – but compared to other instruments that push the two grand mark and beyond, there isn't anything there acoustically that gets my heart pumping any quicker. For anyone looking for a guitar that they will primarily enjoy by themselves at home – that could be a problem. The same characteristics carry over to the plugged-in performance, where you get a supremely clear, balanced and detailed sound – albeit one that is lacking a bit in low-end depth.

However, if you're a performance-oriented player then these complaints shouldn't put you off taking the PCR for a spin by any means. The fact is that this balanced, almost neutral sound is ripe for tweaking and if you're a performer spending £2,000 on your guitar, chances are you've got a pretty good set-up to back it up. With a little EQ dialled in from an amp, mixing desk or preamp pedal, the PCR absolutely shines and transforms into one of the most usable, malleable tone machines you could hope for. This might not compensate for the core acoustic qualities exactly – but I should stress that performance in this area is not bad by any stretch of the imagination – it just doesn't set your world alight in the same way that some other guitars will. Electro enthusiasts may bemoan a lack of tuner or detailed EQ on the preamp but really at this price that sort of thing is generally handled externally. If it's a problem for you, then fair enough, but as someone who already has a stack of pedals and gizmos at my disposal it really didn't affect my enjoyment of the guitar one jot.

CONCLUSION

All things considered, the Premier Concert Rosewood really is a very good guitar. It may not the flashiest looker, or the best-sounding on purely acoustic terms – but to judge the guitar on these areas alone would be to ignore this guitar's central focus. The PCR is an instrument that is perfectly poised in every way to make live and recorded performances as easy and rewarding as possible. Despite all my talk of fingerstyle, the guitar copes perfectly well with a pick, and all-round playability is superb.

As I see it, there are three core areas where the Breedlove truly excels – quality and ingenuity of construction, simplicity of presentation, and ease of operation. All of those things add up to create a compelling package that is designed to be there for you, night after night, with unerring dependability. Coupled with a tonal base that can be adapted to your needs as required and an intoxicating standard of playability, the PCR makes a strong case for itself and deserves to be on any professional gigging guitarist's shopping list.

Alun Lower

LEGENDARY MUSIC STRINGS SINCE 1958
MIKE PETERS
ROTOSOUND PLAYER
ROTOSOUND
11
light
JK11
jumbo king
11-15-22w-30w-42w-52w
phosphor bronze acoustic guitar strings
NEW MOISTURE PROOF PAPER
FREE FOIL POUCHES - KEEPING
OUR STRINGS FACTORY FRESH
PROUDLY MADE IN ENGLAND
FIND OUT MORE
ROTOSOUND
WORLD FAMOUS MUSIC STRINGS
WWW.ROTOSOUND.COM • FACEBOOK.COM/ROTOSOUND • TWITTER.COM/ROTOSOUND_UK

Bass
Guitar Magazine
JAZZ IS AN ART!
DIGITAL EDITIONS
AVAILABLE ON iPAD, iPHONE AND ANDROID
VISIT pocketmags.com
App Store

Frailers
Guitars & Banjos
FRAILERS
89 Church Street, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 1LG
VINTAGE & NEW GUITARS & BANJOS
600 instruments in stock
"WHERE THE STARS SHOP"
GUITARS BY: MARTIN, TAYLOR, GIBSON, GUILD, LARRIVEE, FENDER, GRETSCH AND MANY OTHERS
RESONATOR GUITARS BY:
10% OFF NATIONAL RESOPHONIC, AUTHENTIC DOBRO (ROUND & SQUARE NECK)
BIG DISCOUNTS OFF OZARK RESONATORS
BANJOS BY:
DEERING, VEGA AND GOLDTONE 10% OFF
Catering for collectors / professionals / beginners
24 hour mail order available
Tel: 01928-573087
www.frailers.com email: frailers@btconnect.com

ULTRASOUND CP-100

It may sound like it comes from UltraManchester, but the Ultrasound has in fact crossed the ocean to be with us. Should it have bothered? **Sam Wise** finds out.

In 1972, music shop owner Dean Markley started making his own range of strings, later followed by the Voice Box pedal, made famous by Peter Frampton. 42 years later, strings continue to be one of Dean Markley's key markets, but they also play in the world of amplifiers. High output amps in small packages are no longer a rarity; ZT's lunchbox series, Fishman Loudbox Mini and many others crowd the marketplace for portable power, giving us an enviable choice, but Dean Markley has hooked up with lesser known US brand Ultrasound to bring us a new competitor, the CP-100.

BUILD QUALITY AND FEATURES

In an age where many brands set out to visually distinguish themselves from the competition, Dean Markley has set a fairly conservative and traditional tone with the CP-100. The sturdy plywood enclosure is covered in textured tan leatherette (my apologies to Dean Markley if the covering has ever been anywhere near a cow, but given the price point, it seems unlikely), with all the corners reinforced, and the plain black speaker grille at a very slight angle. The back panel holds the power socket and switch, an FX loop, line and direct outs, and a phono plug input for your CD player or other audio device. On the top, a recessed control panel holds the real business; there are two channels to be found here, both with dual purpose XLR/1/4 inch jack sockets.

Channel one, presumably intended for vocals, has only volume, bass and treble controls, while channel two adds a notch filter with an on/off switch and a frequency sweep control, and a shape control which brings in a mid cut, and corresponding boost to the high and low frequencies. The panel is completed by a master section featuring a master volume and perhaps the most thoroughly equipped FX selection you will ever find in a small acoustic amp. Sure, there are the delays and reverbs you would expect, featuring the predictable hall and room settings, but also no less than three plate reverbs. Then there are the modulation effects; chorus you might expect, flange is maybe a bit of a stretch, but auto-wah and rotary speaker don't make the cut in most acoustic amps. Thankfully, you can only select one of these at once, using the level control to mix it with the main signal, and using the channel toggle to select which to apply it to.

"And what's inside the box," I hear you say... Well, it's a 100 watt RMS amplifier, driving an eight inch speaker, which some would argue is too small for the full dynamic range of a good acoustic, but is competitive with the rest of the market's offerings.

SOUNDS

And so to the sound, which is, regrettably, not all good news. As ever, we plugged in a good all-solid mahogany guitar with Fishman pickup; normally very easy to coax a good tone from, but with both the tone controls at 12 o'clock, the sound was disappointing; a bit lifeless in the treble, muted in the mids, and somewhat boxy in the bass end. Given the proximity of the amp, and the rather miserly angle of the speaker, we tilted it back a little precariously against a chair, which helped; once the speaker is pointed straight at you, the treble particularly livens up a bit, though the tone was still not what we'd expect. A bit of tweaking with the EQ – boosting the treble and kicking in the shape control for a mid cut – helped a lot and got a pretty desirable tone, but you shouldn't have to work this hard for it.

Still in the quest to get the tone to really sparkle, we paid a visit to the FX section, and encountered quite a surprise. Some of the room and hall reverbs can be made to work

fairly well, providing you are judicious in your use of the mix control. Stray into the other effects, however, and things get messy; the lack of a parameter control means you're stuck with the engineer's choice of rate and depth, and in the case of the choruses here, he chose too much of each for our preference. The choruses and the rotating speaker effect are both a bit intrusive, while the flange and auto-wah, though quite useable, are a bit out of the average acoustic guitarist's comfort zone.

CONCLUSION

This is not a bad little amp, and not so long ago, would have been fairly competitive. The trouble is, you can get a really good little amp in the same price bracket today, with relative ease. The CP-100 is sensibly spec'd, strongly built, handsome and easy to use, but the tone lets it down a little. Anyone with a half decent guitar will be able to get a good tone if they put the effort in to find it, but that shouldn't be necessary; unless there's something wrong with your guitar and pickup combination, you should be able to plug straight in and sound nice. Try the CP-100; you won't kick yourself for buying it, but try the competition too.

Sam Wise

ULTRASOUND CP-100

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Manufacturer: Dean Markley Ultrasound
Model: CP-100
Retail Price: £497

- 100 watts
- Eight inch driver with HF horn
- Two channels
- Combo XLR/1/4" inputs with phantom power on both channels
- Bass and treble tone controls on both channels
- 18dB cut, sweepable notch filter on channel two
- Shape switch (mid scoop) on channel two
- 16 digital effects assignable to either or both channels
- Effects include reverb, auto wah, delay, flange, chorus, and rotary speaker simulation
- Send/return for external effects
- Unbalanced line out
- Balanced direct out
- RCA input for CD/MP3
- Footswitch input for effects on/off
- Vintage style leather handle
- 16"W x 12"H x 11"D

ACOUSTIC TEST RESULTS

Pros: Compact, good looker, feels very solid
Cons: Have to work a bit to get the tone, over spec'd FX doesn't really deliver
Overall: Useable and hardy, but not a category killer. The market place for compact acoustics amps is booming, and so it's stiff competition for the Ultrasound CP-100

ACOUSTIC RATING

Video Quality	★★★☆☆
Build Quality	★★★★☆
Value for Money	★★★½☆

5 Stars: Superb, almost faultless.
4 Stars: Excellent, hard to beat.
3 Stars: Good, covers all bases well.
2 or 1 Stars: Below average, poor.

CONTACT DETAILS

Dean Markley
www.deanmarkley.com

For more info visit www.crafterguitars.uk.com - © Sutherland Trading Ltd. All rights reserved. The Crafter logo is a registered trademark of Sutherland Trading Ltd.
All other trademarks are property of their respective owners. Images are for illustrative purposes only.

NEW RELEASES

As supporters of new music, Freshman Guitars has recently launched an interactive website which contains exclusive video footage of interviews and performances with Freshman endorsees.

Check it out: www.freshmanguitars.co.uk

ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL	GENRE
Flávio Apro	The Brazilian Guitar	Brilliant Classics	Classical
Bahamas	Bahamas Is Afie	Island	Folk
Manuel Barrueco & Franco Platino	Virtuoso Guitar Duos	Tonar	Classical
The Beijing Guitar Duo	Bach To Tan Dun	Tonar	Classical
Marc Brierley	Welcome To The Citadel	Cherry Tree	Acid Folk
Nick Drake	Tuckbox	UMC	Folk
The Elizabethan Session	The Elizabethan Session	Quercus	Trad Folk
Márcio Faraco	Cajueiro	Le Chant Du Monde	World
Flatt Lonesome	Too	Mountain Home	Bluegrass
Mary Flower	When My Bluebird Sings	Bluesette	Blues
The Gipsy Kings	The Real… Gipsy Kings	Sony Music	World
The Hedgerow Folk	Come Close	CD Baby	Folk
Alex Hodgson	The Brig Tae Nae Where	Greentrax	Scottish
Lightnin' Hopkins	Rarities: Nothin' But The Blues	Essential Media Mod	Blues
Aisling Jarvis	A Handful Of Bad Ideas	BEO	Folk
Michael Kolk	Mosaic – Classical Guitar Favourites	Alma	Classical
Catherine MacLellan	The Raven's Sun	Linus Entertainment	Folk
Millers Daughter	So Hollywood	My Major Company	Country
Phil Ochs	Live Again!	Rockbeat	Folk
The Once	Departures	Nettwerk	Folk
Phillip Phillips	The World From The Side Of The Moon	Polydor	Folk
Phox	Phox	Partisan	Indie Folk
Gemma Ray	Milk For Your Motors	Bronze Rat	Folk Pop
Peter Rowan	Dharma Blues	Omnivore	Bluegrass
The Roys	The View	Rural Rhythm	Bluegrass
Derek Ryan	The Simple Things	Sharpe Music	Country
Christina Sandsengen	Shades & Contrasts	Odradek	Classical
Peggy Seeger	Everything Changes	Signet Music	Folk
Ravi Shankar	Nine Decades Vol. IV – A Night At St. John The Devine	East Meets West	Indian
Shovels & Rope	Swimmin' Time	Dualtone	Americana
Luke Sital-Singh	The Fire Inside	PLG UK Frontline	Indie Folk
Smoky Babe	Way Back In The Country Blues	Arhoolie	Blues
Spiro	Pole Star	Real World	Folk
Stephen Stills	Bread & Roses Festival	Klondike	Folk
Vena Portae	Vena Portae	Humble Soul	Alt Folk
Mirel Wagner	When The Cellar Children See The Light Of Day	Sub Pop	Folk
Various Artists	Charlotte Blues	Nehi	Blues
Various Artists	Out & Out Bluegrass	Out & Out	Bluegrass
Various Artists	The Rough Guide To Flamenco Guitar	World Music	Flamenco
Various Artists	The Ultimate Collection Of Sensuous Smooth Jazz Guitar	Shanachie	Jazz

THE NEXT BIG THING

GHOST TRAINS

Photo: Dec Bennan

This month, our "next big thing" is Ghost Trains from Stoke-on-Trent, and the songwriting core of the band, Tim Ellis. Six years and four self-produced albums later, the band is finally finding a healthy reputation thanks to a huge internet fanbase.

Tim's entry into acoustic music was not through the usual route of a guitar lying around at home, rather the pull of bands being formed by friends at school.

'There is no musical history in my family at all, the nearest we got was my mum singing in the choir at school. I got interested because some friends at school were forming a band, and they had a guitarist, so I bought a bass. It was a short-scale bass with flat-wound strings – a bit of a monster to be honest. Then I got an acoustic guitar and started learning chords. It was a pretty cheap guitar, I think most people start with that and then work their way up from there. My first "proper" guitar was actually a bass, which I swapped at a Icoal music store. There was a little old man behind the counter, I don't think he had much idea, so I went in with my shiny white bass guitar and asked him if he could swap it for the beat-up old bass he had hanging on the wall, and he was delighted. He got my awful white shiny bass, and I got a 1972 Fender Precision bass. It needed a bit of work, but a few years later, I sold it for £700 – which is the first and only time I have made any money on instruments.'

'My first decent acoustic was a Landola which is a lovely guitar, it has a wonderful deep tone to it. I took it on holiday a few years ago, and it got ran over by a luggage truck, so it's not quite at its best, but it's patched up and it still plays and I do still like it a lot.'

And to bring us up to date? 'I've got a Gibson CSR-CE which is a really lovely guitar. You know how it is, you pick up a guitar and you just know it's the one for you, and I really liked it the moment I first played it. The body was not too deep, so I don't have to reach over to play it – I am never comfortable if a guitar has a body that makes that happen. The price tag was £900, so I really didn't want to like it as much as I did, but I had just inherited some money, so I bought the guitar.'

Despite Ghost Trains' melancholy music, Tim's quick to assure us he's not a miserable person, but therein lies the appeal. 'I'm not brokenhearted, I'm not sad, I have a lovely wife, and children, and no real problems, but I think everyone has ups and downs in life, and they get through them in different ways – my way is to write songs. I've never really enjoyed upbeat pop or happy songs, I like songs with an edge to them. And that's what people seem to pick up on. We played a local music festival recently, and a guy came up and asked if one of the songs was written about him, and his life, and what he was going through, which was a bit weird because I'd never seen him before. But I understand how people relate to stories in songs, and see their own experiences in there, I think that's the appeal of all music. It's like an empathy, I'm a free public service!'

"I have never been remotely intereseted in being seen as a guitar hero and having lengthy solos all over the place – that's just not me..."

'I usually settle down when everyone is in bed,' Tim says of songwriting. 'I have a rum and coke, and get my guitar out and strum a bit, and sometimes a melody will come, sometimes not. The lyrics are not usually there, they come along later, sometimes I may have a chorus that will sit around for months until I find something to put it with. I've found out that the trick is learning to live with a song. They have to pass the test of time when you write them. Another trick is to record everything, which I do using my phone. If you have had a drink and it's late, the chances are you won't remember anything the next morning, so it has to be put down right then so it doesn't get lost. I found a snatch of melody on my phone a few days ago

and I really liked it, and I've got no memory at all of playing it or recording it, so the rule about recording is a good one.'

Although unsigned until recently, Ghost Trains has enjoyed success via the internet, connections which Tim developed in the early days of social media. 'I started putting stuff up on MySpace when that first appeared. I put all our stuff up there, and we were successful, we had 33,000 friends on MySpace which was a big number in those early days. It got us interest from a manager in Russia, so we went and did some gigs there, and we have done some gigs in America and around Europe. As an unsigned band we have enjoyed quite a bit of success. We are going to be making some videos to promote our new material because without a visual presence on the internet, it's next to impossible to get noticed. Our record company is helping us to sort that out.'

Ghost Trains is now signed to the Shark Free label – which came from an unplanned meeting. 'I own a rehearsal space and recording studio called Bad Apple Studios in Stoke-on-Trent. Occasionally, management companies come in to see bands play showcases to see if there is any interest in recording them. This time, I was interested in the company, and I told their representative that I had a band, and played some tracks. They came and saw myself and Kramer Caldwell – our percussionist – play a small set, and they offered us a deal there and then. We have been recording in their Hilltown Studios in Colne. Their engineer worked in Peter Gabriel's Real World Studios in Bath, and he really understood our sound, and he has already remixed three of the four albums we made ourselves at my studio. We are working towards a single release and an album at the end of the year.'

'It is difficult trying to crack the live scene because there are so many bands out there, but we are on the lookout for a good booking agent because we want to play as often as we can to get our music out there in advance of the single and album. We are filming a video this autumn for our first release, and there are plans for a launch tour in Berlin early next year, so we are really looking forward to that. We keep working away, and we'll see what happens. I just play some background, and do a little picking now and again, and rely on other people to make it sound nice. I have never been remotely intereseted in being a guitar hero and having lengthy solos all over the place – that's just not me.'

It may not be, but when you can write songs like 'Don't Tear Me Down' which would fit nicely on any Crowded House album, guitar heroism really doesn't matter much at all.

www.ghosttrains.net

Andy Hughes

Photo: Bob Hadfield

gear4music.com

Up To **60 Days** Money Back Guarantee ✔

Up To **5 Years** Extended Warranty ✔

Choose From Over **20,000 Products** ✔

Based In The **United Kingdom** ✔

Highly **Competitive Prices** ✔

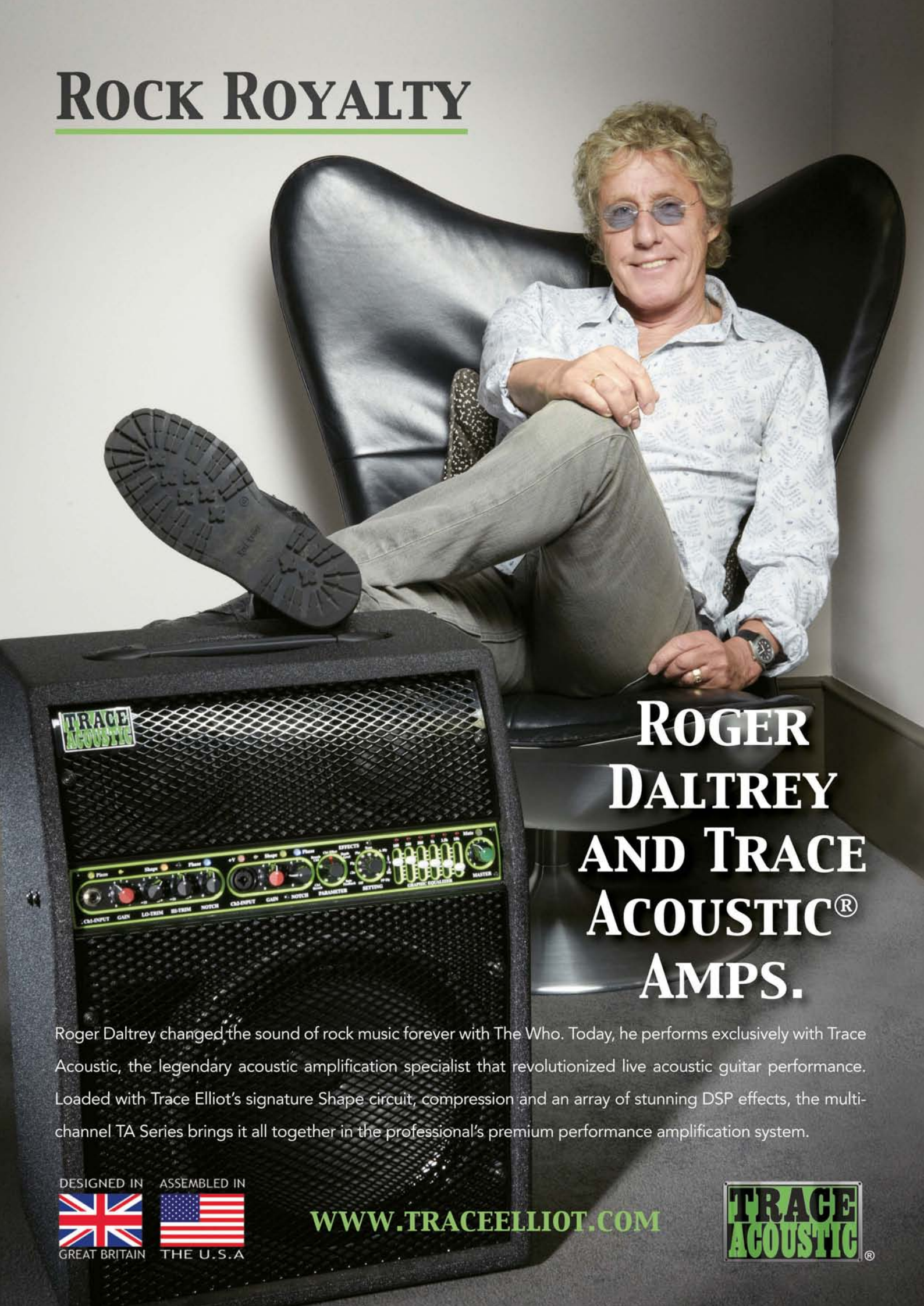
Flexible Delivery Options ✔

www.Gear4music.com

email: info@gear4music.com

telephone: 0843 155 0800

ROCK ROYALTY



ROGER DALTREY AND TRACE ACOUSTIC® AMPS.

Roger Daltrey changed the sound of rock music forever with The Who. Today, he performs exclusively with Trace Acoustic, the legendary acoustic amplification specialist that revolutionized live acoustic guitar performance. Loaded with Trace Elliot's signature Shape circuit, compression and an array of stunning DSP effects, the multi-channel TA Series brings it all together in the professional's premium performance amplification system.

DESIGNED IN GREAT BRITAIN

ASSEMBLED IN THE U.S.A

WWW.TRACEELLIOT.COM

TRACE ACOUSTIC®

THE WORKSHOP

PEPE ROMERO JR

THERE'S A TWO TO THREE YEAR WAITING LIST FOR A ROMERO CLASSICAL GUITAR, USED THE WORLD OVER BY CELEBRATED ARTISTS, INCLUDING JACK JOHNSON.

In 1960 Celedonio Romero founded the classical guitar quartet the Romeros which featured Celedonio and his three sons, Pepe, Angel and Celin. Together they became known as "the royal family of the guitar". Since then, there have been a few changes in personnel, but the line-up is consistently drawn from the Romero family. Pepe Romero Sr. went on to become known worldwide as a classical guitar virtuoso – and it was into this rich musical dynasty that his son, Pepe Romero Jr. was born. So, in a way, it was inevitable that Pepe would become involved with the guitar in some way, right from the start.

'Growing up in the Romero house, I was surrounded by great guitars and great music all the time. I suppose as a child I loved the guitar but I also stayed away from it because there was too much pressure to be another phenomenal player like the rest of the family. So I actually knew that I didn't want to be a professional guitar player. I saw how hard my father worked at being who he is and playing how he does and it seemed like all day, every day was barely enough time to prepare for the next concert or recording. I also didn't like that my father was gone all the time and I knew that when I grew up I wanted to have a family and to be home,' Pepe begins.

When did you first become interested in building guitars?

I guess I'd have to go all the way back to junior high school where I fell in love with woodshop. When I was in my last year of high school, my grandfather was sick with cancer and I was skipping school quite a bit to spend time with him. There was one time towards the end when I told him I had to go and take a test and he looked at me and he said, "Pepe, when are you going to quit school and come and build guitars at my house?" His words stuck with me and when he passed away I had a really strong desire to build one guitar for him. I graduated in 1996 and that summer I met Dake Traphagen who was a guitar maker up in Washington State and a friend of my father. He said if ever I wanted to I could go to his shop and build a guitar. So the following December I made my first guitar in his workshop and realised that somehow my grandfather knew before I did that I was supposed to build guitars. So my workshop is now in my grandfather's house and I'm realising his dream of building guitars there.

"The right kind of wood is everything. Having great quality, well aged wood is so important. I believe that the potential for great sound is in the wood and as a guitar maker I'm trying to build a guitar that enables that wood to unleash its sound."

You've learned from some great makers: Miguel Rodriguez, Joe Romanillos, Dake Traphagen, Manuel Contreras II...

Also Yuris Zeltins, who is a phenomenal repairman in San Diego; but the teacher I studied with most extensively was Edmund Blöchinger. One thing I got from studying with so many masters is that there is not just one way to build a guitar and have it come out great. You have to follow your intuition and your heart and trust your ears and your hands. I would say one of the things I learned from these guys is not to get hung up on a measurement or a thickness but to hold the wood in your hands, flex it, feel it and try to bring the top to a certain flexibility through bracing and thicknessing that you can only feel in your hands.

What is your philosophy regarding building guitars today?

I love the sound of the old romantic Spanish guitar. I believe that it has to sound beautiful, be full, clear, have great separation between the notes and that the sound it produces should be inspiring and gorgeous. I believe in power – we need to be able to play the guitar and get a very strong tone – but power is only good when it's beautiful. Every part of the guitar should be set in motion when you pluck the strings and so I want the whole thing vibrating. I try to build guitars that are fairly light and so when I pluck the strings the neck is vibrating and so is the head, the sides, the back, the top and the whole thing is set into motion. I try to avoid building in any stresses or awkward tensions into the wood so that the guitar is relaxed within itself.

What sort of tone do you try to bring out in your instruments?

From the very beginning I knew what I wanted to achieve, because I grew up in a house with amazing guitar players and what is possibly one of the finest guitar collections in the world. When I was a child I looked around and saw guitars all over the house: Miguel Rodriguez guitars, Santos Hernandez guitars, Domingo Esteso, Torres, Hauser I, II and III, Fleta... all the great masters. And, to me, the sound that those unbelievable guitars produced was the way a guitar should sound. So as soon as I started building I knew what I wanted to hear from my own instruments and I had to figure out how to achieve that.

"I realised that somehow my grandfather knew before I did that I was supposed to build guitars. My workshop is now in my grandfather's house and I'm realising his dream of building guitars."

You have also established your own style of bracing.
I use a reverse fan bracing system which means that the braces cluster towards the butt of the guitar and fan out towards the soundhole. I've expanded on an experiment that Miguel Rodriguez did in 1970 with a reverse fan brace guitar that was the most pure-sounding instrument and had really gorgeous overtones. It wasn't the most powerful sounding instrument, but I was inspired to try to find a way to preserve the sound that I heard and loved, but bring out the power, too.

How important is sourcing the right kind of timber with regards to tone?
The right kind of wood is everything. Having great quality, well aged wood – especially for the top of the instrument – is so important. I believe that the potential for great sound is in the wood and as a guitar maker I'm trying to build a guitar that enables that wood to unleash its sound. I don't feel that I'm doing something that adds extra sound or extra beauty, it's all in the wood and it's my job to bring that out.

You've built instruments for Jack Johnson – do they differ in construction from your standard models?
Jack has three of my guitars now and they are traditional classical guitars. There's no difference. He has a unique tuning in that he tunes them way down, but they're just standard classical guitars which I think is really great and it shows how the nylon string guitar can apply to any style of music.

With certain tonewoods becoming less available these days, are you experimenting with alternative timbers?
I'm very open-minded with wood. I believe that a great piece of wood doesn't necessarily have to be of the type that we've been using historically. But if a piece of wood, regardless of what it is, feels good in my hands and has the right flex and weight and quality of cut, I would be happy to try it. I recently did a project with Jack Johnson, trying to bring attention to the problems created by global warming across the Rocky Mountains. There's a bark beetle infestation that has wiped out over a billion trees and so we worked with former US Vice President Al Gore's Climate Reality project and built a guitar called The Guitar Reality. I built the back and sides of the guitar out of Ponderosa Pine, the trees the beetles had killed. Since then I've also made a second guitar and a bunch of ukuleles as well and so I've been playing with that with great results.

After building classicals, how did you come to start building ukuleles ?
In 2010 I went to Hawaii with my wife and daughter and we fell in love with the music and the culture on the island. Shortly after that we were in a music store with ukuleles hanging on the wall and my wife and daughter asked if I would build one each for them. I thought about it for a minute and said it sounded really cool and so I made a series of eight instruments, the first two being for my wife and daughter. I told a few friends about them and within a week or so the remaining six were already spoken for. I really enjoyed building them and they turned out really nice and I wanted to see if there was actually a market for it and so I made another 16 after that and they went immediately, so I decided to pursue it.

I had different design ideas in my mind and so I started this company called Romero Creations and right now I have four models out. They're made in Vietnam at the highest level in a production setting. All solid wood, they're serious instruments but they come in at a much more affordable price than my hand-builds. I'm able to work in collaboration with Daniel Ho and my father as well on this project and I'm having a lot of fun creating new designs and putting them out there on the market.

For more information on Pepe's work, visit:
www.peperomero.com
www.romerocreations.com
David Mead

The Andrew White 'Goddess Series' From £400

FREJA 112
INDIAN ROSEWOOD
£549

ACOUSTIC
THE UK'S ONLY ACOUSTIC GUITAR MAGAZINE

CYBELE 100J
JATOBA
£400

ACOUSTIC
THE UK'S ONLY ACOUSTIC GUITAR MAGAZINE

Introducing Andrew White Guitars 'Goddess Series' exclusively available through The North American Guitar.

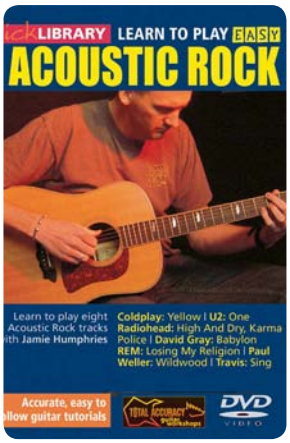
For more information visit www.thenorthamericanguitar.com or call 0207 835 5597 for details.

Finance available on application.

The North American Guitar
The UK Home of the Finest Custom Guitars

MEDIA SHOP

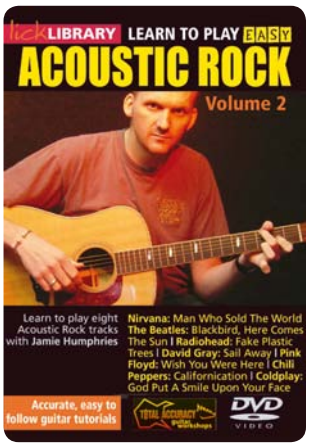
Acoustic magazine, in association with Lick Library, offers you a wide selection of instructional DVDs, covering a variety of genres, styles and ability levels, all aimed at making you a better player and developing your skills. Best of all – *Acoustic* readers get special prices!


LICK LIBRARY LEARN TO PLAY EASY
ACOUSTIC ROCK
Learn to play eight Acoustic Rock tracks with Jamie Humphries
Coldplay: Yellow I U2: One
Radiohead: High And Dry, Karma Police I David Gray: Babylon
REM: Losing My Religion I Paul Weller: Wildwood I Travis: Sing
Accurate, easy to follow guitar tutorials
DVD

LEARN TO PLAY ACOUSTIC ROCK

WITH JAMIE HUMPHRIES

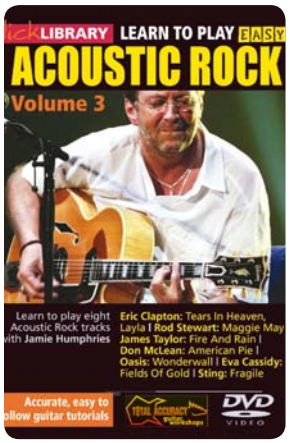
Includes songs from Coldplay, U2, REM, Paul Weller, Travis, David Gray; with easy and accurate guitar tutorials there's no better way to learn your favourite songs.


LICK LIBRARY LEARN TO PLAY EASY
ACOUSTIC ROCK
Volume 2
Learn to play eight Acoustic Rock tracks with Jamie Humphries
Nirvana: Man Who Sold The World
The Beatles: Blackbird, Here Comes The Sun I Radiohead: Fake Plastic Trees I David Gray: Sail Away I Pink Floyd: Wish You Were Here I Chili Peppers: Californication I Coldplay: God Put A Smile Upon Your Face
Accurate, easy to follow guitar tutorials
DVD

LEARN TO PLAY ACOUSTIC ROCK VOL. 2

WITH JAMIE HUMPHRIES

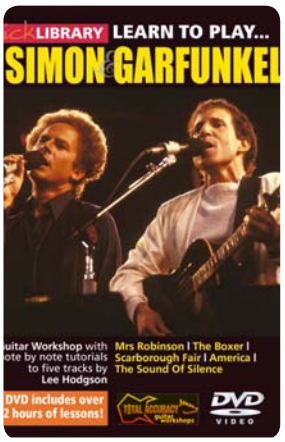
In this essential guide to acoustic rock, learn to play tracks from Nirvana, The Beatles, Radiohead, David Gray, Pink Floyd, The Red Hot Chili Peppers, Coldplay and many more.


LICK LIBRARY LEARN TO PLAY EASY
ACOUSTIC ROCK
Volume 3
Learn to play eight Acoustic Rock tracks with Jamie Humphries
Eric Clapton: Tears In Heaven, Layla I Rod Stewart: Maggie May
James Taylor: Fire And Rain I Don McLean: American Pie I
Oasis: Wonderwall I Eva Cassidy: Fields Of Gold I Sting: Fragile
Accurate, easy to follow guitar tutorials
DVD

LEARN TO PLAY ACOUSTIC ROCK VOL. 3

WITH JAMIE HUMPHRIES

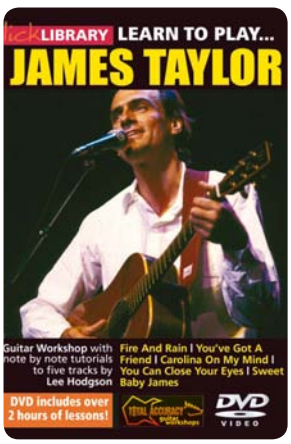
Includes songs from Eric Clapton, Rod Stewart, Don McLean, Oasis, Sting, James Taylor, and Eva Cassidy. This DVD gives you easy-to-learn tutorials.


LICK LIBRARY LEARN TO PLAY...
SIMON & GARFUNKEL
Guitar Workshop with note by note tutorials to five tracks by Lee Hodgson
Mrs Robinson I The Boxer I Scarborough Fair I America I The Sound Of Silence
DVD includes over 2 hours of lessons!
DVD

LEARN TO PLAY SIMON & GARFUNKEL

WITH LEE HODGSON

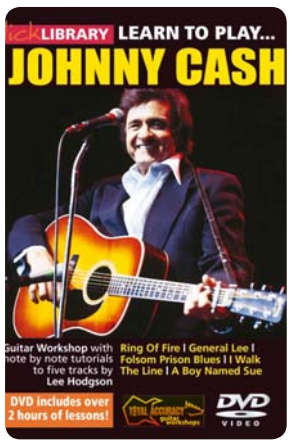
Learn how to play some of Simon & Garfunkel's most well known songs including: The Boxer, Scarborough Fair, Mrs. Robinsons, America, and more.


LICK LIBRARY LEARN TO PLAY...
JAMES TAYLOR
Guitar Workshop with note by note tutorials to five tracks by Lee Hodgson
Fire And Rain I You've Got A Friend I Carolina On My Mind I You Can Close Your Eyes I Sweet Baby James
DVD includes over 2 hours of lessons!
DVD

LEARN TO PLAY JAMES TAYLOR

WITH LEE HODGSON

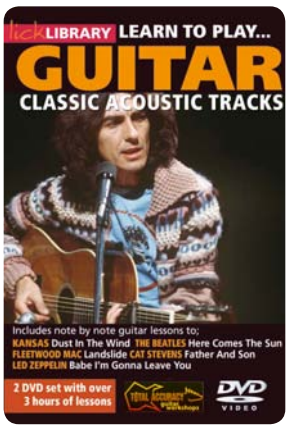
Learn to play some of the classic James Taylor songs with Lee Hodgson and easy-to follow guitar tutorials. Fire and Rain, You've Got A Friend, Sweet Baby James.


LICK LIBRARY LEARN TO PLAY...
JOHNNY CASH
Guitar Workshop with note by note tutorials to five tracks by Lee Hodgson
Ring Of Fire I General Lee I Folsom Prison Blues I I Walk The Line I A Boy Named Sue
DVD includes over 2 hours of lessons!
DVD

LEARN TO PLAY JOHNNY CASH

WITH LEE HODGSON

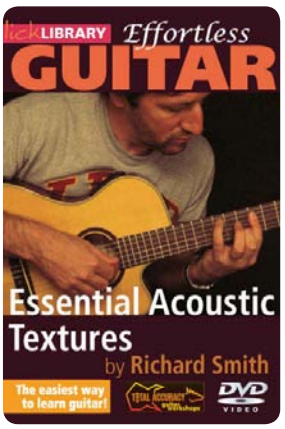
Learn to play some of the classic Johnny Cash songs with Lee Hodgson and easy-to follow guitar tutorials. Ring of Fire, Walk The Line, and more.


LICK LIBRARY LEARN TO PLAY...
GUITAR
CLASSIC ACOUSTIC TRACKS
Includes note by note guitar lessons to:
KANSAS Dust In The Wind THE BEATLES Here Comes The Sun
FLEETWOOD MAC Landslide CAT STEVENS Father And Son
LED ZEPPELIN Babe I'm Gonna Leave You
2 DVD set with over 3 hours of lessons
DVD

LEARN CLASSIC ACOUSTIC TRACKS

WITH DANNY GILL

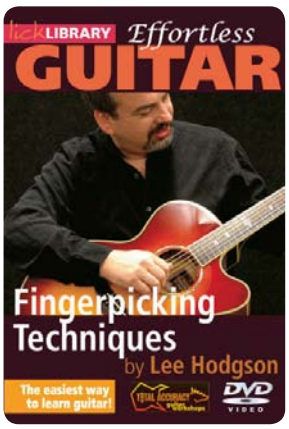
With tracks from Kansas, The Beatles, Fleetwood Mac, Cat Stevens, Led Zeppelin. Danny Gill is a former pupil of Joe Satriani.



ESSENTIAL ACOUSTIC TEXTURES

WITH RICHARD SMITH

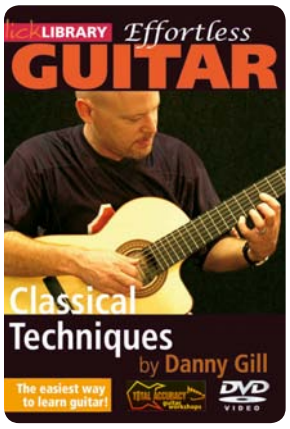
Develop your guitar skills in this easy-to-follow guide with Richard Smith. Become a better player today with this DVD.



EFFORTLESS FINGERPICKING

WITH LEE HODGSON

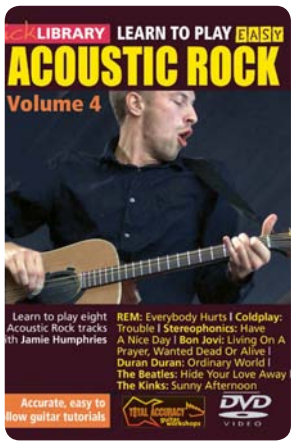
Want to become a better fingerpicker? Well you can do just that with this essential guide with Lee Hodgson. Easy-to-follow instructions and clear tutorials.



EFFORTLESS CLASSICAL GUITAR

WITH DANNY GILL

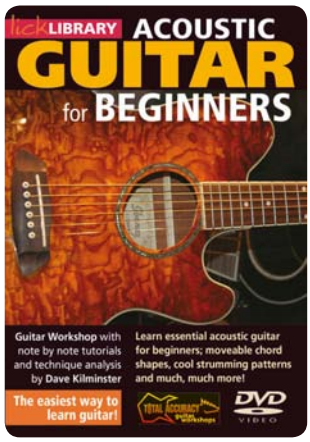
Become a better classical guitar player by spending time with this DVD and Danny Gill. Easy-to-follow instructions and clear tutorials.


LEARN TO PLAY EASY
ACOUSTIC ROCK
Volume 4
Learn to play eight Acoustic Rock tracks with Jamie Humphries
REM: Everybody Hurts | Coldplay: Trouble | Stereophonics: Have A Nice Day | Bon Jovi: Living On A Prayer, Wanted Dead Or Alive | Duran Duran: Ordinary World | The Beatles: Hide Your Love Away | The Kinks: Sunny Afternoon
Accurate, easy to follow guitar tutorials
DVD

LEARN TO PLAY ACOUSTIC ROCK VOL. 4

WITH JAMIE HUMPHRIES

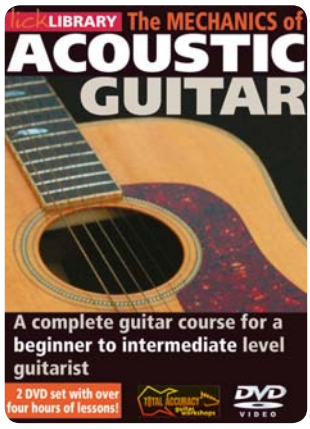
Includes songs from Duran Duran, The Kinks, The Beatles, REM, Coldplay, Bon Jovi, and Stereophonics, all with easy-to-follow tutorials.


ACOUSTIC
GUITAR
for BEGINNERS
Guitar Workshop with note by note tutorials and technique analysis by Dave Kilminster
Learn essential acoustic guitar for beginners; moveable chord shapes, cool strumming patterns and much, much more!
The easiest way to learn guitar!
DVD

LEARN TO PLAY ACOUSTIC ROCK VOL.2

WITH JAMIE HUMPHRIES

In this essential guide to acoustic rock, learn to play tracks from Nirvana, The Beatles, Radiohead, David Gray, Pink Floyd, The Red Hot Chili Peppers, Coldplay and many more.


The MECHANICS of
ACOUSTIC
GUITAR
A complete guitar course for a beginner to intermediate level guitarist
2 DVD set with over four hours of lessons!
DVD

THE MECHANICS OF ACOUSTIC GUITAR

WITH LEE HODGSON

Each chapter in this DVD includes chord vocabulary, while commonly used scales and techniques are introduced, along with some practical theory. You'll soon be strumming chords and picking out melodies.

Virtual Newsagent.com

The online magazine & book store

Order through us for the special *Acoustic Magazine* discount on all DVDs. Visit **www.virtualnewsagent.com** or call our office on 01926 339 808 for these and more great offers!

Either fill in the form below – don't forget to put a tick by the DVDs you're ordering – and post or fax it to us, or call us on the number at the bottom, and your new DVDs will be sent straight to your door. Easy as that.

DVD	RRP	Acoustic (AM Price)	✔
Learn to play Acoustic Rock	£23.99	£20.00	
Learn to play Acoustic Rock Vol 2	£23.99	£20.00	
Learn to play Acoustic Rock Vol 3	£23.99	£20.00	
Learn to play Acoustic Rock Vol 4	£23.99	£20.00	
Learn to play Acoustic Rock Vol 5	£23.99	£20.00	
The Mechanics of Acoustic Guitar	£23.99	£20.00	
Learn Classic Acoustic Tracks	£24.99	£21.50	
Essential Acoustic Textures	£19.99	£17.00	
Effortless Fingerpicking Techniques	£19.99	£17.00	
Acoustic for Beginners	£19.99	£17.00	
Learn to play James Taylor	£24.99	£21.50	
Learn to play Simon & Garfunkel	£23.99	£20.00	
Learn to play Johnny Cash	£24.99	£21.50	
Effortless Classical Guitar	£19.99	£17.00	
Total +£4 P&P (free on orders over £30)		£	

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

_____

POSTCODE/ZIP CODE _____ **COUNTRY** _____

TELEPHONE _____

EMAIL _____

SIGNATURE _____ **DATE** _____

☐ **I enclose a cheque for** _____ **payable to Blaze Publishing Ltd.**

☐ **Please debit my Switch/VISA/Mastercard/Maestro for** _____

No Electron or Amex please

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Expiry date _____/_____ **Start date / issue no.** _____/_____

CVV no. ☐☐☐ **(last 3 digits on reverse of card)**

Your credit card statement will read 'Blaze Publishing Ltd'.

***Overseas customers – call for best postage rates**

Order by phone, online or by post

01926 339 808

www.virtualnewsagent.com

Blaze Publishing Ltd, Lawrence House, Morrell Street, Leamington Spa, CV32 5SZ, England

ACOUSTIC

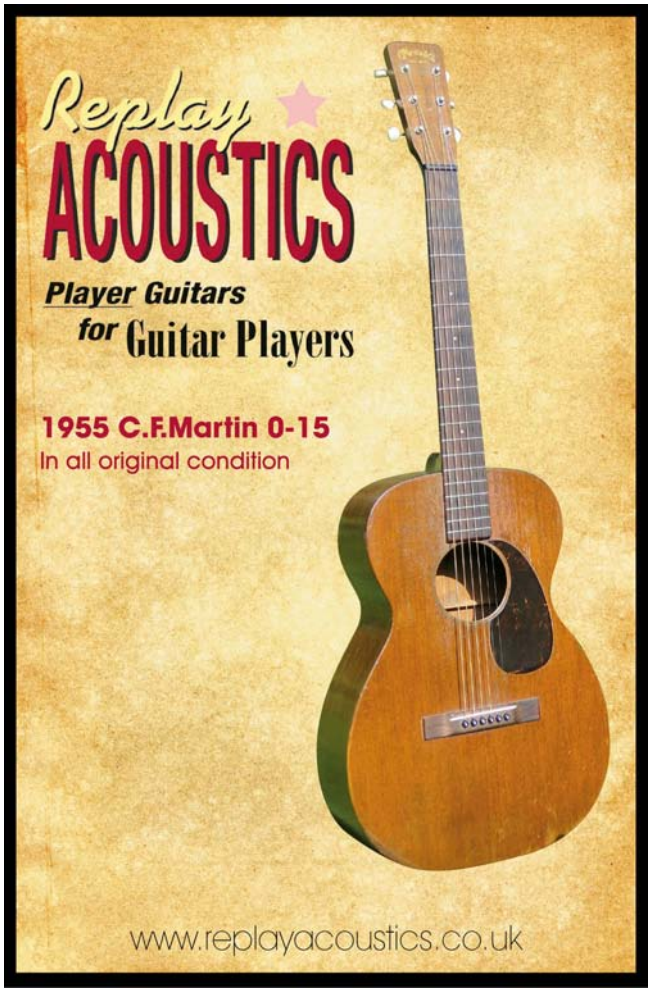
THE UK'S ONLY ACOUSTIC GUITAR MAGAZINE

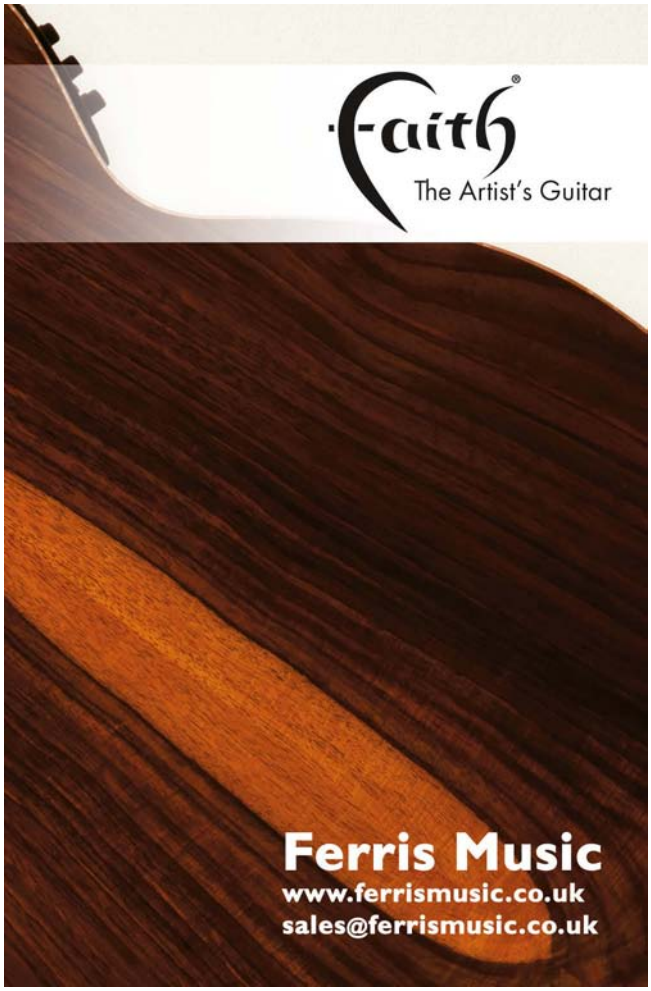
DIGITAL EDITIONS

AVAILABLE ON iPAD, iPHONE AND ANDROID

VISIT pocketmags.com

Available on the iPhone App Store





Ashbury Ukuleles

AU-10 MARTIN STYLE
handy little ukes with a big sound in three attractive woods.

Soprano mango **£54.95**
Scale length: 350mm
Soprano walnut **£59.95**
Scale length: 350mm
Soprano spruce **£49.95**
Scale length: 350mm

FLAMED OAK AU-40
Flame oak body, satin finish. Mahogany neck, fitted with Aquila strings. Padded bag.

Soprano £59.95
Scale length: 344mm
Concert £69.95
Scale length: 390mm
Tenor £119.00
Scale length: 432mm
Baritone £139.00
Scale length: 486mm

SOLID MAHOGANY AU-50
Solid mahogany body, Mahogany neck, rosewood fingerboard, Fitted with Aquila strings. Padded bag.

Concert £109.00
Scale length: 390mm
Tenor £149.00
Scale length: 432mm

LAMINATE ASH AU-60
Ash top, body, bound fingerboard, geared tuners. Fitted with Aquila Strings. Padded bag

Concert £89.95
Scale length:382mm
Body depth:65mm
Overall length:603mm

Concert EQ £119.00
Passive undersaddle pickup

Tenor £99.00
Scale length:432mm
Body depth:70mm
Overall length:656mm

Baritone £110.00
Scale length:515mm
Body depth:80mm
Overall length:754mm

CURLY KOA AU-80
Curly Koa body, bound fingerboard. Abalone rosette, Fitted with Aquila Strings. Padded bag

Concert £179.00
Scale length:382mm
Body depth:65mm
Overall length:603mm

Ashbury Pro Ukes
AU-24 series in solid rosecherry
AU-34 series in solid koa
from £199 to £399

Tenor £189.00
Scale length:432mm
Body depth:70mm
Overall length:656mm

Baritone £209.00
Scale length:515mm
Body depth:80mm
Overall length:754mm

Tenor, EQ £239.00
Cutaway Model
Pickup and 3 band EQ
1 x 9V Battery Included

distributed by
www.gremlinmusic.co.uk
Tel: +44 (0) 1903 203044

12 STRING CORNER

An original tune from Paul to improve your 12-string technique

I'll admit it: I have never spent a great deal on any instrument. I have just been lucky enough to pick guitars up when they were out of fashion, if you like, or even unheard of. There's a rule of thumb that I go by: look at the music and artists that are (or were, in most cases) playing the guitars and take a chance on your own judgment. The guitar's value will often mature in value over time. Many of today's players use vintage guitars because they say they have "that" sound – something modern guitars struggle to reproduce.

The rarest 12-string I own is a 1920s Weymann. I have never seen another! It is the guitar I based my Vintage signature 12-string on. It has a very high spec with Brazilian rosewood, and a unique bridge combination of the six lower strings fixed by a tailpiece and the six octaves secured at the fixed bridge on the bout; probably done to ease the string pull on the table. It is also parlour in size which is great for ease of playing. Between 1920 and 1926, Martin made instruments for Weymann including six-strings for Wurlitzer, one of which I have. Due to the high spec of the 12-string, I asked Martin's guru Dick Boak if there were any records of Martin making a 12-string for Weymann and he said it may have been the case as records for that period were not complete and they did make instruments for Weymann. So, maybe that's why there appears to be only one in existence as Weymann guitars, in general, did not have high-end specs. It's also worth noting that Harmony 12-strings from the 50s and 60s have started to rise in value.

Finally, here's some more tablature for you to sink your fingers into which will improve your 12-string skills. Another one of my original tunes entitled 'Jacob's Ladder'. It's full of twists and turns and there is a link in the digital edition so you can hear me playing it.

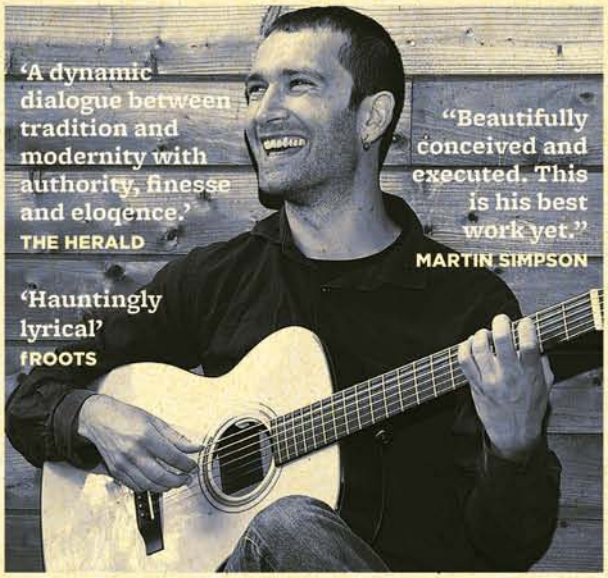
Paul Brett

'JACOB'S LADDER' BY PAUL BRETT

APP EXTRA
PRESS **PLAY** TO HEAR PAUL PLAY 'JACOB'S LADDER'

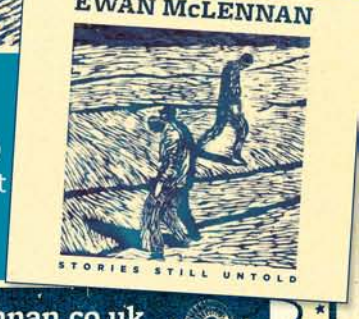
ONLINE EXTRA
DOWNLOAD THE FULL TRANSCRIPTION OF 'JACOB'S LADDER' AT **WWW.ACOUSTICMAGAZINE.COM**

EWAN McLENNAN


'A dynamic dialogue between tradition and modernity with authority, finesse and eloqence.'
THE HERALD
"Beautifully conceived and executed. This is his best work yet."
MARTIN SIMPSON
'Hauntingly lyrical'
fROOTS

AUTUMN 2014 TOUR

11/09 LOUGHTON FOLK CLUB, ESSEX
12/09 WATFORD FOLK CLUB
13/09 SMALL IS FESTIVAL, BRISTOL
03/10 THE FOUNDLING MUSEUM, LONDON
05/10 FOLK HOUSE, BRISTOL
17/10 THE MUSIC INSTITUTE, GUILDFORD
18/10 MISS PEAPOD'S, PENRYN
25/10 GLOSSOP LABOUR CLUB
07/11 KORKS, OTLEY, WEST YORKSHIRE
19/11 THE RED LION, BIRMINGHAM
20/11 TOPIC FOLK CLUB, BRADFORD
21/11 ROOTS MUSIC CLUB, DONCASTER
22/11 DAVY LAMP FOLK CLUB, WASHINGTON
23/11 THE GLAD CAFE, GLASGOW
24/11 GLENFARG VILLAGE FOLK CLUB, GLENFARG



NEW ALBUM 'STORIES STILL UNTOLD' (FECD263)
Released 29th Sept 2014 on Fellside Recordings.

www.EwanMcLennan.co.uk
TWITTER: @EWANMCLENNAN
FACEBOOK.COM/EWANMCLENNANFOLK
fellside recordings
www.fellside.com

Forsyth

Your Complete Music Store in Manchester, since 1857

Quality & expertise in our friendly shop.

www.forsyths.co.uk/guitars
0161 834 3281 extension 606

Acoustic Guitars:
British Acoustic Specialists:
Atkin, Brook, Patrick James Eggle, Fylde, Dave King, Lowden, Moon.

C.F. Martin & Co EST. 1833 We are a Martin Heritage centre and Westside Custom centre.

Maton, Stonebridge/Furch, Faith, Guild, Seagull, Crafter, Aria, Alvarez

12-strings, resonators, acoustic basses & baritones, second hand & vintage.

Classical Guitars:
Burguet, Ramirez, Sanchez, Asturias, Guitars JC, Höfner. Student Classicals by: Admira, Valencia, Raimondo, ARIA.

Guitar Repairs:
A full range of repairs & modifications - call us for advice or a quote.

LOWDEN 40th O35
BLACKWOOD/CEDAR £4625
Celebrating George's 40 years of guitar making. Stunning and then some.

ATKIN TROUBADOUR DELUXE £2999
Based on Atkin's tenor, this is a small guitar for people who travel in style.

FAITH SIGNATURE FSGVEBY £1599
All solid and with glorious figure to the Macassan ebony limited edition.

Folk Instruments:
Ukulele Specialists: a huge range of sopranos, concerts, tenors, baritones & banjoleles by Martin, Uluru, Risa, Kala, Lanakai, aNueNue, Lani, Puka, Korala etc.

Mandolins by **Fylde, Moon, Stonebridge, Eastman** etc. Mandolas, bouzoukis etc.

Banjos, Electric violins & double basses

Electric Guitars:
RIC Rickenbacker One of the best selections of **Rickenbacker** guitars in the UK

Fender USA Dealer, a huge range of electric guitars and basses in stock. Gordon Smith, Gretsch, Godin, Höfner, Italia, Aria, Squier. Lap Steels.

String & Orchestral Instruments - Full Range of violins, violas, cellos, basses.
Comprehensive string repair service.
Excellent selection of woodwind & brass.

Any enquiry, big or small, give us a call!

Over 150 Years of expertise in musical instrument retail. Spacious city centre location, 15,000sq ft spread over five floors.We also stock an extensive range of folk, string, brass and woodwind instruments, acoustic pianos, digital pianos and keyboards, as well as sheet music, DVDs, CDs and software.

www.forsyths.co.uk/guitars
Forsyth Brothers Ltd, 126 Deansgate, Manchester, M3 2GR
0161 834 3281 extension 606
@ForsythMusic Forsyths.Music.Shop

IN THE LOOP

OVERDUBBING WITH CONTRASTING TIME SIGNATURES

I was walking home the other day and outside the tube there was a busker with a guitar doing old swing standards. The first thing I noticed was that he was using a loop pedal. Great songs transcend any setting whether they are played using a loop pedal, a rock trio, a big band or an orchestra. Studying everyone from Bacharach to Napalm Death, Cardiacs and Nick Drake, will help to improve your songwriting and arranging skills. Learning covers can really help your songwriting, take the songs you like apart and see how they work. I'm not saying you should become a covers act (although there is nothing wrong with that), learning covers really helps you to learn songwriting and arrangement. For example, many musicians had their first exposure to inversion chords through the Beach Boys song 'God Only Knows'. It's all about keeping an open mind.

Just because you're using an acoustic guitar and a loop pedal, it doesn't mean you have to play simple repetitive chord sequences. The only real limit is your imagination and the amount of music you can store in your loop pedal. If you study the work of the great soundtrack composer John Barry, you'll soon see that even a four-chord sequence can be exciting and surprising. One useful trick is to drop in a bar of a time signature different to one you're playing in into a chord sequence. For example, take 'Bone Machine' by the Pixies. This song is in 4/4 most of the time, until the pre-chorus, which ends with a bar of 3/4. It's a shock for the listener at first, but it should keep them interested. 'Hey Ya' by Outcast features a surprising bar of 2/4 against its overall 4/4 time signature.

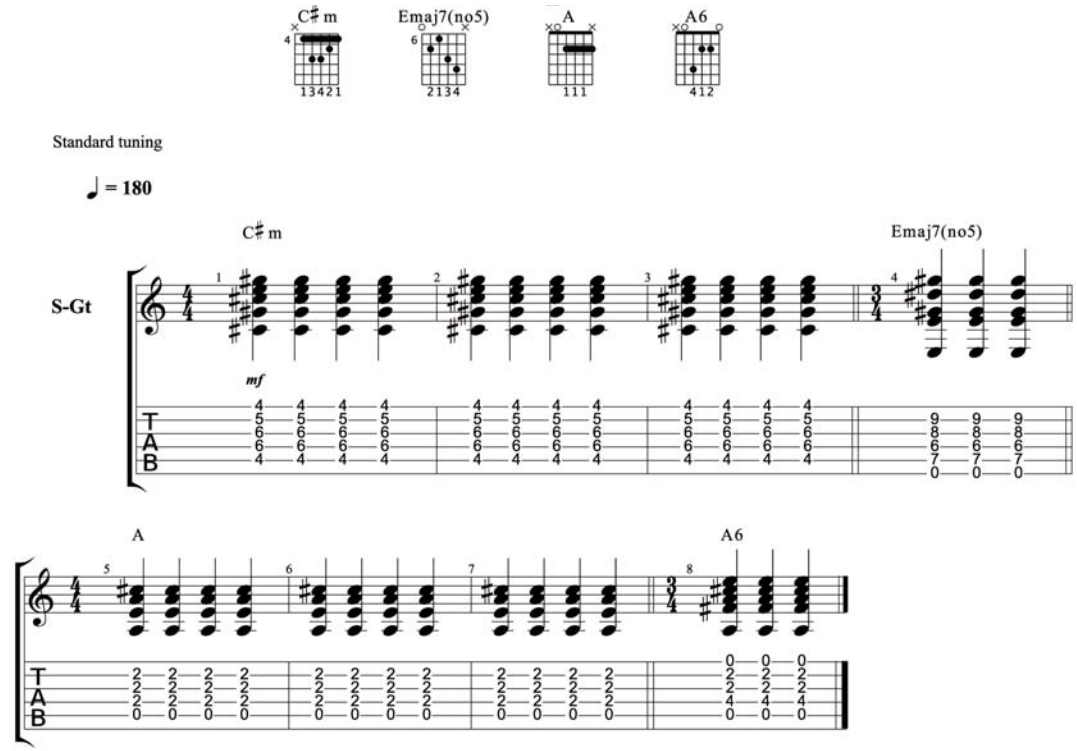
Odd timings can be very useful for all songwriters – and, no, not just prog rockers! If you're writing a song in 4/4, try making one of the bar lengths 3/4 or 2/4 or 5/4. Making things slightly asymmetrical will help to keep the audience interested. To get the feel of different time signatures, try playing to a metronome and counting them. Even the weirdest time signatures can sound natural with practice.

In this month's examples, we'll play a few chords and build up multiple layers on a loop pedal with a song that is mostly in 4/4, but also features a few bars of 3/4. It's nowhere near as complicated as it sounds when you actually play it, and with practice you can play the parts without having to count – you can just feel the changes.

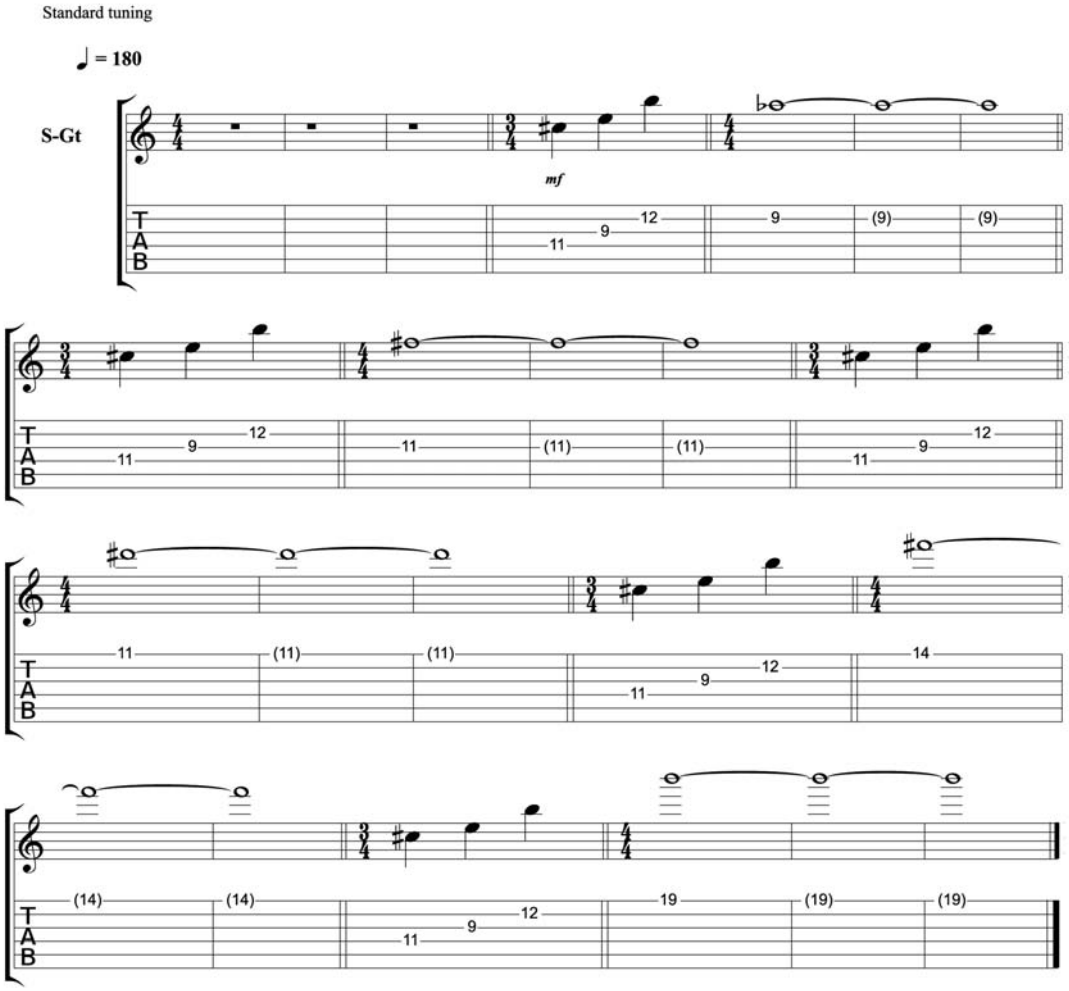
Hit record on your loop pedal and play **example 1** which is in the key of C# minor. Try tapping out the rhythm with your foot to get a feel for the part. If this still doesn't feel natural, try playing the parts along to a click track or metronome for a while.

Once we have our initial loop in place we can overdub a melody, as shown in **example 2**. Often it's tempting to bring in your melody right at the start of the loop but on this occasion the melody comes in on the fourth bar to emphasise the juxtaposition of the 3/4 time signature against the 4/4 in the previous 3 bars. Because the track is quite rhythmically interesting we can get away with quite a simple ascending melody and still keep the attention of the listeners. With this melody you can either play the melody straight or leave the overdub button on your looper pedal switched on

EXAMPLE 1



EXAMPLE 2



and let the melody harmonise with itself as the notes change and you overdub the parts on top of each other. If you have an undo button on your loop pedal you can use this to overdub the stacked version of the melody and then remove it.

Now you may want to bring things down again to create a dynamic contrast. Stop your loop and play **example 3** on its own. This shift from full on looping to a stark picked quiet acoustic guitar, unaccompanied, should make your looped part sound much bigger when it kicks back in. It's all about contrast, this section is all in 4/4 and will make the loop with its unusual bar lengths sound more remarkable when it comes back in. If you want to make something sound big and loud, play something quiet against it. It's why a lot of 80s heavy metal songs start with an acoustic intro, to make the full on distorted part sound bigger by contrast.

Next, kick your loop pedal back in and play **example 4** over the top of your loop from **example 1**, you can leave overdub on and keep this part going if you want to. It's a simple melody that makes the most of the unusual 3/4 time signature every fourth bar. So far we're keeping things fairly minimal, but now we can really start to overdub for the big finish.

You can keep your loop pedal overdub button on for **example 5**. This features some stacked C#m7 (sus4) arpeggios, once again making the most of the 3/4 bar in the initial loop from **example 1** that we are playing over. Try to learn chords in as many positions on the neck as possible as this gives you the most harmonic variations for stacking arpeggios. Johnny Marr does this a lot in the Smiths, as does Radiohead. If you are interested in learning lots more unusual chord shapes try the book *Chord Chemistry* by Ted Greene.

If you are feeling really ambitious you can play C#m7 (sus4) arpeggios only in 3/4 or 4/4 over **example 1**, rather than changing when the time signature changes. They will loop round, create polyrhythms over the unusual bar lengths, meet up eventually, and harmonise against each other. You could even try playing C#m7 (sus4) arpeggios in 13/8, 5/8 or 7/8 over the top – experiment and see what works for you. This idea is used often in the music of the minimalist composer Steve Reich, the juxtaposition of different time signatures over each other.

The only way to play six, 10 or 20 guitar harmony parts live is to use a loop pedal. As a looper with a pedal and an acoustic guitar you can improvise 30 guitar parts as quickly as you can think of them. Even if you had 30 guitar players in your band, can you imagine how hard it would be to show them all the guitar parts? Instead of worrying about the limitations of a loop pedal and guitar setup, exploit the strengths of it. Use dynamics and focus on interesting arrangements. Great songs and interesting ideas will win your audience over.

Matt Stevens

ONLINE EXTRA
DOWNLOAD ALL OF THIS MONTH'S EXAMPLES AT
WWW.ACOUSTICMAGAZINE.COM

MATT STEVENS

Instrumental Composer

Matt Stevens is a musician and composer from London. An instrumental artist, he uses an acoustic guitar and sampler to create multi-layered tracks live. His music has been described as "a guitar orchestra". He plays live all over the UK and listens to Sonic Youth, Carcass, Nick Drake, Cardiacs and King Crimson. He is constantly recording new music for several projects.
www.mattstevensguitar.com

NEW MUSIC

CHUCK PROPHET

NIGHT SURFER

www.chuckprophet.com

Recorded in San Francisco, this is the erstwhile Green On Red-man's 13th studio album and in a world of cookie-cutter, sensitive, singer-songwriters it comes as a huge relief to find there are still artists out there unafraid of letting rip and frightening the horses now and then. Prophet hits his customary, ultra-confident, Stones-meet-Tom Petty stride from the off and as ever (rare, this, for an acknowledged guitar-god) he's more into songs than solos. From the Searchers-style, 60s pop of 'Lonely Desolation' to the arch, Queen Bitch-y raunch of 'Felony Glamour' and the instant, FM-classic crunch of 'They Don't Know About Me and You', Prophet remains a master of snappy, hook-laden, raw-edged rock n' roll.

STEVE BENNETT

THE WILLOWS

AMIDST FIERY SKIES

www.thewillowsband.com

Already selected for the "next big thing" brand from the burgeoning herds of young, English folkies, this Cambridge five-piece's second album feels just a little too polite to see them crashing through into the first rank. Fronted by pure-voiced singer, Jade Rhiannon and singer-guitarist husband, Cliff Ward (whose sister, Prue, conjures some fine fiddle work), it's all beautifully rendered yet disappointingly low in energy and invention. Ward's banjo is the stand-out feature, adding a layer of gentle Americana to respectful covers of Bill Staines's lovely 'Roseville Fair' and Utah Phillips's 'Goodnight Loving Trail' (Rhiannon singing with a very odd accent) and there's a welcome touch of Transatlantic Sessions via Ben Savage's deft, dancing dobro on the country-tinged 'Shores'.

STEVE BENNETT

ROO PANES

LITTLE GIANT

www.roopanes.co.uk

This full-length debut from the Dorset-born singer-songwriter sees him delving ever deeper into the folk soul, Jeff Buckley influence that coloured his earlier EP offerings. This time, despite the winning addition of twin-sister, Deborah's, lovely harmonies, some of the songs feel like sketches rather than fully-formed material. Panes is in hushed, contemplative mode throughout and while the stately, brooding opener 'Know Me Well' and ukulele-led 'Home From Home' explore a post-Buckley ennui, (fortunately he has the voice to carry it off), things liven up as 'Indigo Home' reveals pastoral echoes of Donovan, the spirit of Nick Drake surfaces on 'Tiger Striped Sky' and the title track builds and swells like an acoustic U2 channeling Astral Weeks.

STEVE BENNETT

VASHTI BUNYAN

HEARTLEAP

www.fat-cat.co.uk

Nine years on from her last studio release, *Lookaftering*, the gossamer-voiced songstress ventures out once again onto the tightrope between the sublime and twee for what she insists will be her final recorded statement. The third release since her rediscovery (after 30 years "in the wilderness") sees Bunyan in total artistic control for the first time (playing, writing, producing and recording) and it's a beautiful, low-key triumph. Swooning, delicate opener, 'Across The Water' and the gorgeous, ethereal radiance of 'Holy Smoke' set the tone and from dreamy, Pre-Raphaelite melancholy to hints of Jacques Brel as whispered by Joni Mitchell (on the lovely, 'Shell'), what follows is so rice-paper fragile as to almost blow away on its own delicate breath.

STEVE BENNETT

SCOTT MATTHEWS

HOME PART 1

www.scottmatthewsmusic.co.uk

For the Black Country singer-songwriter and Ivor Novello Award-winner's fourth album he's taken on the production and most of the playing duties himself to offer a low-key, contemplative affair that, at times, leans a little too heavily on loosely structured, post-Jeff Buckley meditations (opener, 'Virginia' setting the dreamy tone). The sprawling, drowsy 'Sunlight' at least sits up straight for the chorus and there's no denying Matthews's soaring tenor is a thing of wonder, especially when delivering the nagging, beautifully elusive melody of standout track 'The Outsider'. There's a warm and sleepy, samba sway to 'The Night is Young' while 'The Clearing' is a drifting, pastoral instrumental which Mat Taylor's whispering flute endows with an almost Isaac Hayes-like cinematic grandeur.

STEVE BENNETT

THE MAGIC LANTERN

LOVE OF TOO MUCH LIVING

www.the-magic-lantern.co.uk

For this, his second album, Australian Jamie Doe strips the production values right back to voice (a latter-day Chet Baker), classical guitar and piano, recorded live to capture all the lyrical intimacy and thoughtfulness of ten originals befitting a one-time philosophy student. It's a gentle, happy-sounding record; at times almost too eager to please in its Clifford T Ward/Duncan Browne politeness but for the most part Doe channels the quirky, melodic warmth of a 70s-era Kevin Ayers or Robert Wyatt, especially on the jaunty, 'Air At The Top' with its sparse, music-hall piano and the hippy-dippy, nylon-string 'Stitches'. The Incredible String Band-isms of 'Different Paths' and 'Winter' only enhance this intriguing, refreshingly odd affair.

STEVE BENNETT

PARKER MILLSAP

PARKER MILLSAP

www.parkermillsap.com

Ten top-notch, country-blues originals from a 20-year-old hailing from deepest Purcell, Oklahoma (pop. 5,952) who, while his fire and brimstone, Pentecostal upbringing clearly informs the songwriting, has by his own admission, "moved on". Declaiming shaggy-dog parables like a junior Tom Waits, aided and abetted by fiddler, Daniel Foulks, Millsap excels in character-driven narrative delivered in a voice that's one shot Paolo Nutini (opener, 'Old Time Religion' and the strutting, harmonica-led, 'When I Leave') plus two shots of young John Prine. 'Truck Stop Gospel' is Chuck Berry hitching a ride in Elmer Gantry's Freightliner while 'Forgive Me' is a twang-fuelled, old school country weeper. Steeped in tradition, then, but whip smart modern throughout. A cracking debut.

STEVE BENNETT

PEPPINO D'AGOSTINO

PENUMBRA

www.peppinodagostino.com

No gimmicks but a few surprises from an acoustic steel-string virtuoso, long hailed by the likes of Tommy Emmanuel and Leo Kottke. Co-founder of the renowned Pacific Guitar Ensemble, D'Agostino here takes on a selection of contemporary classical pieces and two compositions specially written for him by Brazilian guitarist, Sergio Assad. When the initially sombre, reflective title track suddenly launches into a headlong flurry of hammer-ons and pull-offs, we sense an artist unafraid of pushing the proverbial envelope. The rippling, impressionistic, 'Una Serata a North Beach' and the bouncing, Celtic Segovia of 'MB Love' prove that while he can do the look-at-me pyrotechnic stuff, it's thankfully kept to a minimum, notably on the shamelessly romantic, Pat Metheny-ish 'Incantation'.

STEVE BENNETT

GLASSWERK PRESENTS
NICK HARPER
24 OCTOBER
RUBY LOUNGE
MANCHESTER
25 OCTOBER
LEAF CAFE
LIVERPOOL
09 NOVEMBER
BORDERLINE
LONDON
BOX OFFICE FEES MAY APPLY WHEN PURCHASING A TICKET
TICKETS PLUS THE LATEST MUSIC AND TOUR NEWS AVAILABLE FROM GLASSWERK.CO.UK

HARRY MANX
27 OCTOBER
CASTLE HOTEL
MANCHESTER
66 OLDHAM ST
PICADILLY NOTHERN QUARTER
30 OCTOBER
BORDERLINE
LONDON
ORANGE YARD MANNETE ST
BY TOTTENHAM COURT RD
BOX OFFICE FEES MAY APPLY WHEN PURCHASING A TICKET
TICKETS PLUS THE LATEST MUSIC AND TOUR NEWS AVAILABLE FROM GLASSWERK.CO.UK
FOR TICKETS VISIT GLASSWERK.CO.UK

Logjam®
Micrology™
Micrology
www.logjam.net
Pocket-sized dynamite!
www.logjam.net

Playing live, writing or recording?
Join us
theMU.org
Musicians' Union
mu

THE NEW A1+

PURE ACOUSTIC PERFORMANCE

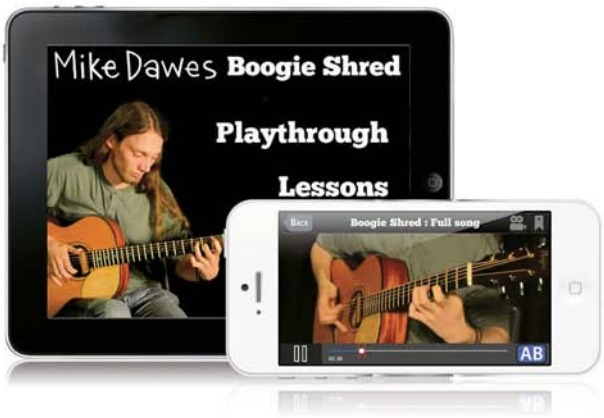
Laney
EST. 1967
JUST PLAY IT

www.laney.co.uk
From The Black Country, United Kingdom

HEADSTOCK DISTRIBUTION
EMPOWERING MUSIC

Get more from your guitar...
...with Mike Dawes

Learn to play Boogie Shred



Percussive Acoustic Guitar

Leafcutter Studios

www.MikeDawes.com
www.LeafcutterStudios.com

Available on the App Store

Cover gear worth £1.5K for less than the price of a pint a month*.

Terms and conditions apply.**

0800 048 0065
www.allianzmusic.co.uk

Allianz Musical Insurance

Allianz

*Price based on UK cover and based on UK average pint cost of £3.10.
**£100 excess applies to computer equipment. Allianz Musical Insurance is a trading name of Allianz Insurance plc.

ACOUSTIC TECHNIQUES

TECHNIQUES - TRANSCRIPTIONS - TIPS

WANT TO IMPROVE AS AN ACOUSTIC PLAYER?

Acoustic magazine's level-specific technique and advice columns can do just that...

Acoustic would like to encourage you to dig into our column pages more frequently and really get to grips with the wide range of skills and talents available at your fingertips. Our columnists offer up a selection of performance pieces, technical advice on the mechanics of playing, important aspects of theory and more, all to help you improve as a player.

NEW
Elixir® HD Light Strings
a new voice to love – for longer
NANOWEB
NEW
DEVELOPED WITH Taylor
Elixir
great tone • long life
NANOWEB
with ANTI-RUST plain steels
PHOSPHOR BRONZE
Acoustic Guitar Strings
BOLDER high end
FULLER low end
HD LIGHT / .013 – .053
HD Light Phosphor Bronze with NANOWEB® Coating
80/20 BRONZE
Acoustic Guitar Strings
HD Light 80/20 Bronze with NANOWEB Coating
Learn more:
www.elixirstrings.co.uk/hdlight
Elixir strings
GORE, ELIXIR, NANOWEB, POLYWEB, GREAT TONE - LONG LIFE, "e" icon, and other designs are trademarks of W. L. Gore & Associates.
©2014 W. L. Gore & Associates, Inc.
ELX-332-ADV-EN-FEB14

OUR COLUMNISTS

92 CLIVE CARROLL

94 LEON HUNT

96 DANIEL HO

98 THOMAS LEEB

100 DAVID MEAD

102 CHRIS WOODS

Have a Goodtime

Goodtime banjos are American made, lightweight, easy to play, and sound great everywhere - especially outdoors. Enjoy the freedom of a Goodtime banjo.

GOODTIME®
Relax and Enjoy the Sound

Made With Pride By
DEERING
The Great American Banjo Company

goodtimebanjos.com

CLIVE CARROLL
Acoustic Virtuoso

Essex boy Carroll was born into a family of musicians and 35 years on he finally got a job writing for Acoustic magazine. In between, he spent a lot of time waiting around in airports, filing his nails and befriending theatre sound technicians.
www.clivecarroll.co.uk

TECHNIQUES SKILL LEVEL: ADVANCED

WESTWARD MOVE

A DADGAD TUNE WITH AN IRISH INFLUENCE

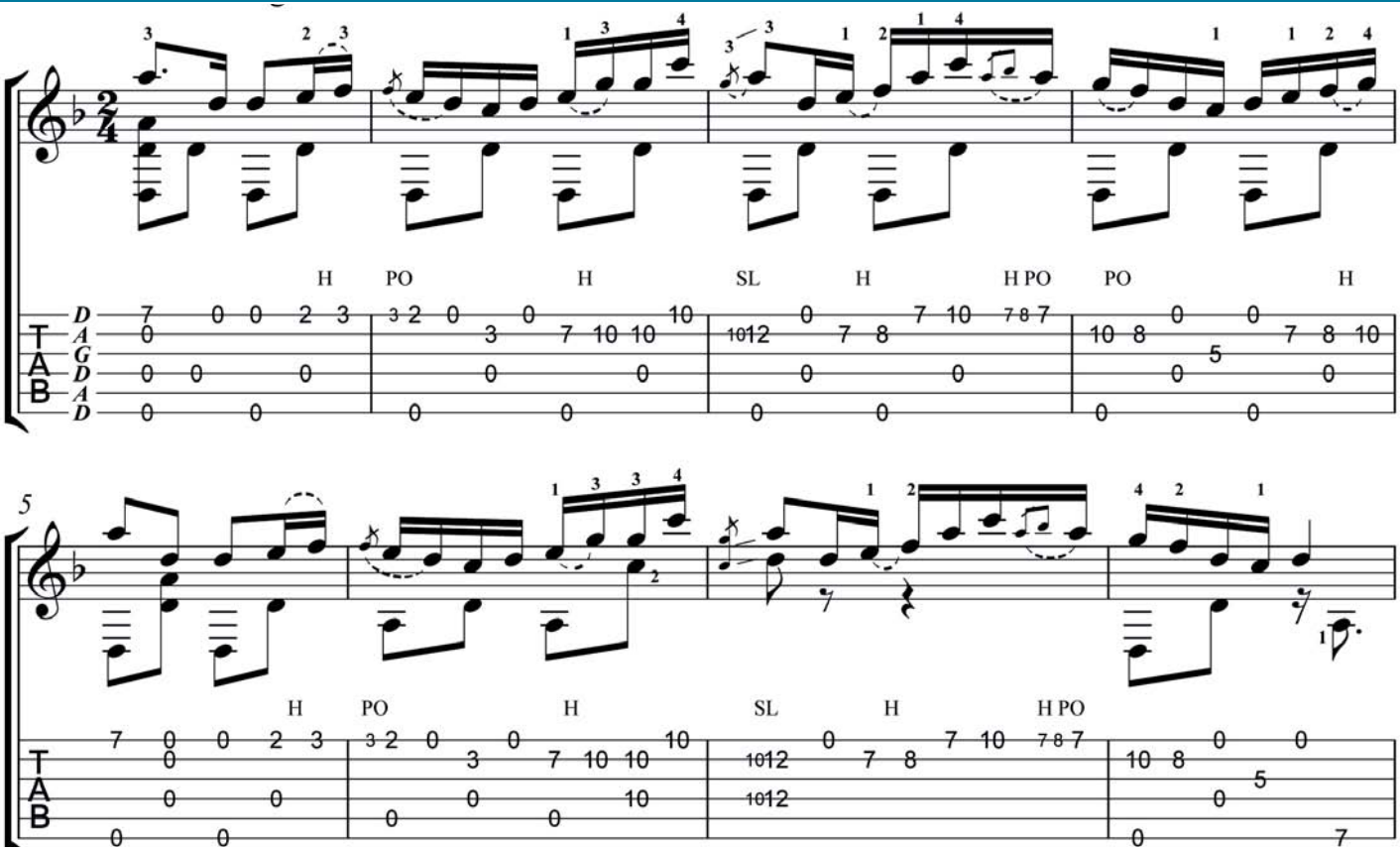
In my previous article we looked at my composition 'Black Moon'. I hope you enjoyed the tune and that its chord shapes, scales and ornamentation were good learning tools. I mentioned that it is usually paired with my slow march, 'Westward Move', which is the subject of this month's article. I first recorded the Celtic influenced 'Westward Move' on a CD entitled *The Red Guitar (2004)* and the entire score including tablature is available via my website.

The 'Westward Move' melody itself is just 16 bars in length and the first time it is played, it is done so with sparse harmony. On the second repeat, the accompanying figure opens with an alternating bass line in D, and on the third time round the alternating bass line begins on the chord of G. The score printed in this article is the second-time, D version.

To get started take a look at the bass part on line one of the score. In the musical notation, the stems point downward and an alternating D-note figure is heard using strings six and four. All of these notes are played with the thumb.

Next, try playing the melody line on its own. The

'WESTWARD MOVE' CLIVE CARROLL



NEW
Elixir® HD Light Strings
a new voice to love – for longer
ELX-332-ADV-EN-FEB14
GORE, ELIXIR, NANOWEB, POLYWEB, GREAT TONE · LONG LIFE, "e" icon, and other designs are trademarks of W. L. Gore & Associates. ©2013 W. L. Gore & Associates, Inc.

tune is played almost entirely on strings one and two. There is one C on string three, in bar four. Fretting-hand fingerings are marked in the score along with articulation slurs. In the tablature, "H" represents hammer-on, "PO" pull-off, "SL" slide, and later on, "CO", which stands for cut-off or staccato. Remember that this is a march and so rhythm is extremely important. The pull-off at the start of bar two, for example, is an acciaccatura and it should be delivered with a snap. The slide at the start of bar three is swift, and the ornament at the end of that same bar sounds right on the semiquaver beat. Be careful to play groups of semiquavers in time regardless of whether they are plucked, pulled-off or hammered.

Once the melody becomes familiar, try playing both the tune and bass together. It might feel strange at first but it will not be too long before it "clicks". In a way the technique used here is not too dissimilar to the alternating thumb patterns associated with American country guitar playing.

The B section of this tune starts with the bass A at the end of bar eight. The first finger moves up to Bb and the fourth finger is used for the harmonics at the twelfth fret in bar nine – a bit of a stretch! Finger four then frets the first string high-D – notice the slightly syncopated bass line. After a few run-throughs, it should start to sit comfortably. The big stretch appears at the start of bar 13. The first finger plays the G on string five, while fingers three and four fret the high Bb and F. It may be useful to spread this chord and, if so, ensure that the high F on string one is sounded on the downbeat. In other words, begin the spread at the very end of bar 12.

I have marked the score with my personal fingerings, which I hope you find useful. I would consider the ones in the concluding line four to be essential.

As far as the picking hand is concerned, the thumb mainly plucks the lower three strings and the other fingers sound the top three. I prefer not to over-complicate the score with fingering letters but I feel it is important to repeat consecutive semiquavers with different digits as opposed to playing the repeated notes with the same finger. Some players generally use index, middle and ring, while others prefer just the index and middle. I have heard this piece played both ways and as long as the fingers alternate and the rhythmic thumb patterns are metronomic it will sound rock steady. I hope you enjoy learning this piece and perhaps joining it to 'Black Moon'.

Clive Carroll

- Bolder, stronger high end
- Fuller, warmer low end
- Balanced voice across all strings
- Ideal for narrow bodied guitars
- Comfortable, balanced hand feel
- .013, .017, .025, .032, .042, .053

Elixir® strings

Learn more:
www.elixirstrings.co.uk/hdlight

LEON HUNT
UK Banjo Expert

Leon Hunt continues to confound the stereotypes that try to confine the banjo to bluegrass, by making his living playing alongside some of the world's top musicians from a number of musical styles and disciplines. That said, he's not one to shy away from the clichés either – watch the TV for a long enough and there's every chance you'll hear some of his music. Leon has also enjoyed being part of several major theatre productions and as well as being a frequent contributor to *Acoustic*, Leon also recently completed his debut instructional package for Mel Bay, which is out now. ***www.leonhunt.com***

TECHNIQUES SKILL LEVEL: SUITABLE FOR ALL

TOO MANY NOTES...

NOT ENOUGH MELODY

The title for this month's column could be interpreted in a couple of ways; as a conundrum: "What do we do with all those notes when a song's melody is so sparse?" or as an accusation: "I'm hearing loads of notes but absolutely no music whatsoever". For this month's column, we're going to focus on the former, but the unfortunate truth is that both interpretations will ultimately boil down to the same thing without a degree of imagination, musicality and effort. I'll explain...

One of the banjo's defining and most endearing characteristics is its supreme ability to turn out a relentless stream of eighth notes (quavers). I say ability, but what I actually mean is obligation. The transient characteristics of the banjo's notes seem to command a "keep playing or die" mentality. This is all very well, but what if you've run out of things to say? If you're an absolute beginner, you'll probably just unceremoniously grind to a halt and stop playing altogether. An intermediate, or dare I say, an insensitive player, will often plough on regardless. It's these players that run the risk of having "the accusation" levelled at them. Fast and relentless musical drivel is after all, just lots of musical drivel.

It goes without saying that we need to do our best to avoid courting "the accusation" so to that end we need to face the "the conundrum" head on. What do we do with all these extra notes? Music written specifically for the banjo will by definition have the requisite number of notes to satisfy the instrument's insatiable appetite for melody. No problems there, but sadly banjo tunes will in all probability only amount to about 5 per cent of the music you'll encounter as a banjo player. What happens when you're required to conjure up a banjo part for a song where the melody notes come along at far less frequent intervals than eight to the bar, but stylistically that barrage of notes is still very much what's required? I'll tell you: you have to put on your composer's hat and come up with something flashy, but not too flashy, driving and full, but unobtrusive and always 100 per cent in keeping with the musical setting. This is easily the hardest part of being a banjo player. Trying to come up with a part for a bluegrass song can be hard enough, but integrating yourself into music outside the banjo's natural musical habitat can often take even more head scratching.

Before we get properly stuck into the murky world of arranging banjo parts, I'm going to flag up something that gets neglected by banjo players all too often and will definitely have you running the risk of courting "the accusation": dynamics.

If we take a standard 16-bar melody such as 'You Are My Sunshine', there's every chance a banjo part for the song would contain something in the region of 120 notes (and a small handful of rests). The actual melody of the song contains only around 40 notes, leaving a whopping 80 banjo notes left wandering around performing nothing other than stylistic and rhythmic duties. Irrespective of how well conceived and engineered your arrangement is, if all the notes are played with the same volume and intensity its going to be very tricky for the listener to differentiate the killer from the filler. Before you start playing, always take some time to identify the actual melody notes to the song within the banjo part and make sure they receive the attention they deserve, making them stand out sufficiently above the rest.

I'm going to continue within the bluegrass idiom for the remainder of this article as drifting further afield would almost certainly mean taking over the whole magazine. That said, a solid understanding of what's entailed within bluegrass should form an excellent basis for any further exploration.

If we liken music to language, as with all forms of music, bluegrass has its own vocabulary; the licks are the words, stringing several licks together will form sentences. In language, words will often come in several forms, usually by adding a suffix or a prefix, or by changing context. By just using the root words or by applying an inappropriate suffix or prefix you end up with a kind of Pidgin English, you might just about get the message across but it'll be somewhat clumsy and probably lack any elegance or accuracy. The same is true of music. If you merely shoehorn stock licks into bars of the correct length and of the same chord type, you'll in all probability just end up with pidgin banjo.

NEW
Elixir® HD Light Strings
a new voice to love – for longer
ELX-332-ADV-EN-FEB14
GORE, ELIXIR, NANOWEB, POLYWEB, GREAT TONE · LONG LIFE, "e" icon, and other designs are trademarks of W. L. Gore & Associates. ©2013 W. L. Gore & Associates, Inc.

YOU ARE MY SUNSHINE - KEY OF G

Having a strong vocabulary is key to this. It's not sufficient however to merely know lots of licks, although it's true to say the more you know the more likely you're going to be able to apply the best ones for the job. But equally important is that you know every single one of them well enough to be able to make the necessary shifts in emphasis towards melody notes that might occur within the phrases, either by applying dynamic changes or even subtly altering the licks to place melody notes where you want them.

All this is much easier said than done but if you keep referring back to the language analogy, it'll really help keep things in perspective; the goals and the potential pitfalls. It's also worth keeping in mind that there is also a certain amount of latitude in terms of where you place the melody notes, judiciously moving important notes back or forwards a quaver or two will often provide some welcome syncopation. I've covered this in previous columns but briefly; we're playing primarily "square music" (4/4 or 2/4) using three points of contact (thumb, index and middle fingers). This will have you constantly needing to lose or gain notes in order to place the melody notes exactly where they're supposed to be. The trick is, don't try to, at least not all the time. Let the playing style impose itself on the music and embrace the syncopation.

Leon Hunt

- Bolder, stronger high end
- Fuller, warmer low end
- Balanced voice across all strings
- Ideal for narrow bodied guitars
- Comfortable, balanced hand feel
- .013, .017, .025, .032, .042, .053

Elixir® strings

Learn more:
www.elixirstrings.co.uk/hdlight

DANIEL HO
Grammy Award-winning musician

Daniel Ho is a multiple Grammy Award winner and record producer specialising in Hawaiian music. In 2010, Daniel's solo ukulele album *Polani* became the first of its kind to receive a Grammy nomination. He has numerous Hawaiian music industry accolades, has authored eight tuition books and tours the world as an acclaimed songwriter, performer and university lecturer. Daniel was born in Honolulu, but is now based in Los Angeles.
www.danielho.com

TECHNIQUES SKILL LEVEL: SUITABLE FOR ALL

POLYRHYTHMIC COUNTERPOINTS

FROM ABC TO E=MC²

The simplest things in life often bring us the most joy. As toddlers, our introduction to music is by way of clear and catchy melodies like 'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star'. Nursery rhymes remain a formative part of our culture, generation after generation, because they are easily sung yet profoundly memorable. From there, our musical tastes evolve melodically, harmonically and rhythmically; only to come full circle to the tunes of our youth when we begin to raise children of our own. Sadly, between our roles as kids and parents, these songs are all but forgotten. But what if there was a way to maintain their relevance? What if we were to frame the melodies of our childhood in more sophisticated settings?

'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star' is an English poem set to a French melody. Let's turn things around a bit and take a French nursery melody, 'Frère Jacques', known in English as 'Are You Sleeping?' and see what kind of frame we can build around it. Take a look at **example 1** – this is the melody to 'Frère Jacques' as we know it.

There are three basic elements to music: melody, harmony, and rhythm. When framing (or arranging) a song, we usually refrain from altering the melody notes too much, because this is how listeners recognise the song. So, we'll focus on developing harmony and rhythm, the other two elements.

'Frère Jacques' is in common time (4/4), which has four beats per measure. This time signature is called common time because it is the most frequently used rhythmic setting. Let's start building our frame by placing the melody in a different meter. **Example 2** is the first four bars of 'Frère Jacques' reset to 6/4 time.

You might have noticed that singing or playing the melody in 6/4 is rhythmically identical to doing it in 4/4. The only difference is that the underlying rhythmic pulse has changed. We'll see how this is important as we continue to build our frame.

In **example 3**, we have added an extra beat in bars two and four, causing

EXAMPLE 1

EXAMPLE 2

Elixir® HD Light Strings
a new voice to love – for longer
Elixir® strings
great tone • long life™
ELX-332-ADV-EN-FEB14
GORE, ELIXIR, NANOWEB, POLYWEB, GREAT TONE · LONG LIFE, "e" icon, and other designs are trademarks of W. L. Gore & Associates. ©2014 W. L. Gore & Associates, Inc.

the time signature to alternate between 6/4 and 7/4. Together, these two time signatures make up a rhythmic phrase of 13 beats (13/4).

Now that we've decorated our frame with rhythmic variation, let's compose a counterpoint to the 'Frère Jacques' melody in our new 13/4 time signature. Counterpoint is a musical element that does not parallel the melody. It elaborates on the original melody and can also help to define harmony. In keeping with the aesthetic of evolving tradition, this counterpoint is based on the traditional flamenco rhythm bulería, which is a 12/8 rhythm with emphases on beats 1, 4, 7, 9, and 11. To avoid the obvious, the emphases are reversed so the accents are on beats 1, 3, 5, 7, and 10. The countermelody is composed to this inverted bulería rhythm in **example 4**.

The exercise of creating counterpoint is more than just a way to add depth to an arrangement. The counterpoint can also be used as introductory material.

I bet you were wondering when we were going to mention the ukulele in this ukulele article. So much about music is in the music itself, not specific to any instrument. Now that we've built our frame around 'Frère Jacques', let's figure out how we can realise it on the ukulele. The use of open strings can never be underestimated on stringed instruments. Choosing the key of G is a major factor in being able to play this arrangement on ukulele. The low G string acts as the pedal tone and does not need to be fingered by the left hand, allowing it the freedom to play the melody and polyrhythmic counterpoint at the same time. In this key, the melody does not extend past the seventh fret of the first string, keeping the left hand generally in first position. Take a look at **example 5**.

And there you have it – a nursery rhyme embellished with polyrhythmic counterpoints. An arrangement that fills the gap between childhood and parenthood through elaborate framework.

From ABC to E=mc²! 'Frère Jacques' is the opening track of Daniel's new release *Our World In Song* – a collaboration with Wu Man and Luis Conte.

You can buy Daniel's music from his website and on iTunes.
www.DanielHo.com

EXAMPLE 3

EXAMPLE 4

EXAMPLE 5

THOMAS LEEB

Fingerstyle Virtuoso

Austrian-born Thomas Leeb plays a style he calls "the bastard child of acoustic fingerstyle." This style owes as much to percussive techniques as traditional fingerstyle guitar as his tunes are usually punctuated by slaps, pops and beats. Adding to the overall effect is his frequent use of ringing harmonics. 'What Thomas does on an acoustic guitar probably shouldn't be legal.'

www.thomasleeb.com

TECHNIQUES SKILL LEVEL: ADVANCED

TRICKSTER

PART TWO

'TRICKSTER' - THOMAS LEEB

Let's take a look at the last section of my tune 'Trickster' which is in CGEbGGD tuning. Three minutes and 36 seconds into the video I drop everything else and switch to two-handed tapping mode.

The trick with any hammer-on or pull-off is to use just the right amount of force. You don't want to hammer your fingers on so hard that you end up out of tune. The same goes for pull-offs: use too much force and things just won't sound good any more. Find the right amount of force.

Take time to get familiar with bar one here before charging on. The underlying formula of this bar is used everywhere else here as well.

The first note is hammered with your right-hand, and the double 12 is done with your left, which means you'll effectively cross your arms. Make sure to leave the second right-hand note in place while you play the open first string with your right-hand little finger because you'll want to pull that note off on

NEW
Elixir® HD Light Strings
a new voice to love – for longer
ELX-332-ADV-EN-FEB14
GORE, ELIXIR, NANOWEB, POLYWEB, GREAT TONE · LONG LIFE, "e" icon, and other designs are trademarks of W. L. Gore & Associates. ©2013 W. L. Gore & Associates, Inc.

the "and" of three in this bar. Something similar happens in bar two: the right-hand finger you hammer onto the second fret of the fourth string remains in place until you pull it off at the end of the bar.

The rhythm between right- and left-hand remains the same – what changes are the left-hand chords and the tap targets. The switch from bar four back to bar one is tricky as both hands have a long way to travel in a short time.

What's left after this are just little variations. The second repeat (bars five to eight) is almost identical to repeats number one, three and four with the sole exception of a single note in bar eight (bar five on the fourth string). Thanks for grooving. See you next time.

Thomas Leeb

APP EXTRA
PRESS **PLAY** FOR
ADDITIONAL CONTENT

- Bolder, stronger high end
- Fuller, warmer low end
- Balanced voice across all strings
- Ideal for narrow bodied guitars
- Comfortable, balanced hand feel
- .013, .017, .025, .032, .042, .053

Elixir® strings

Learn more:
www.elixirstrings.co.uk/hdlight

DAVID MEAD
Tuition Author

David Mead is one of the UK's foremost guitar writers, having authored several best-selling tutors. An accomplished acoustic guitarist, he has released two critically-acclaimed albums, *Nocturnal* and *Arboretum*.
www.davidmead.net

TECHNIQUES SKILL LEVEL: SUITABLE FOR ALL

DISCOVERING DADGAD

'INTO THE SANDBOX'

I want to introduce you to a method for coming up with instrumental pieces and songs that has worked for centuries. Composers and songwriters use it to great effect and some of the greatest musical compositions on the planet have come about via its use. It's called "noodling". Well, that's one word for it – you might prefer to call it "hit and miss" or "trial and error", but the important thing is that it works and it's relatively easy to learn, too.

All you really need to go noodling is a chord sequence and a few melody notes that are guaranteed to fit with it. In this way, it's best to start with one of the oldest and most tried and tested chord sequences in the book. Known in music as the I - VI - IV - V chord arrangement, it has featured in many hit songs from the last 100 years. It's been used by everyone from Gershwin to the Beatles and just about everyone in between.

In the key of C major, the chords would be C, Amin, F and G and the song that immediately springs to mind when I play it is 'Unchained Melody' which was a massive hit for both the Righteous Brothers and Elvis – and so it's definitely a good place to begin your noodling experiments!

Let's get started. I've written out the chords in DADGAD tuning in **example 1** and you'll notice that I've given you an alternative for the G chord. The first one is relatively easy to play as it's really just two fingers with no undue stretches, but it lacks a definitive G in the bass. All the other chords have their root note in the bass of the chord and while it's certainly OK to have a B there instead, as in the first example, you might prefer to have the more steadfast option of the G. I've given you both – the G-in-the-bass version of the chord is slightly trickier to play, that's all.

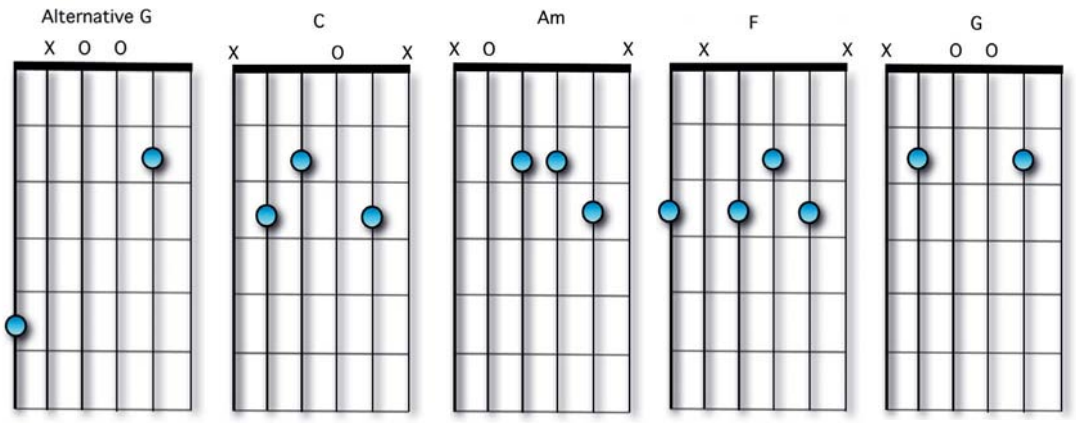
In order to help you learn the chords I've written them out in 12/8, which is the time signature of many an old rock'n'roll ballad, including 'Unchained Melody' itself. So spend a little time arpeggiating the chord arrangement so that your left hand fingers really know the territory well before we start trying to superimpose a melody on top. I've written it out with both versions of G and even if you find the more stretchy version a bit difficult at first, I'd still encourage you to try both as it will help increase your stamina and reach on the fretboard. **See examples 2 and 3.**

Next we need some melody notes and seeing that we're in the key of C major, there's no better place to start than with the C major scale. So your first step in noodling is to become familiar with both the chords and the scale independently. I've deliberately kept the scale notes down the bottom of the neck so that they're all in reach whilst playing the chords. **See example 4.**

The next thing is to play the scale over and over until it becomes second nature. The version I've written out in **example 4** is full of open strings and so it shouldn't be at all demanding for the fingers – it's just that the pattern of notes really needs to be ingrained in your memory before the noodling process can work to its fullest effect.

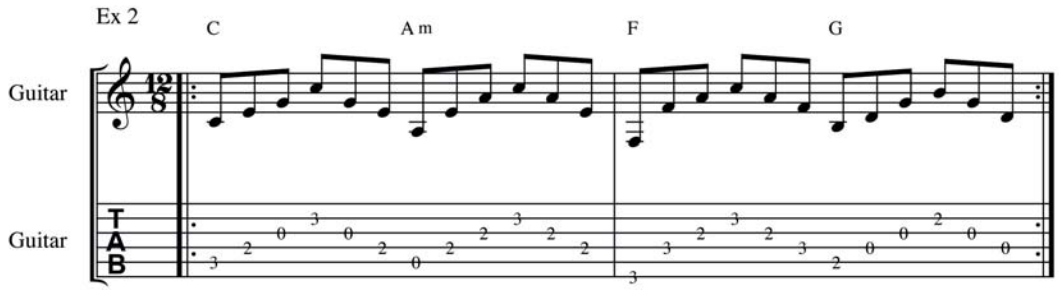
Once you're sure that you are completely sure-footed with both the chords and the scale, take a look at **example 5**. This is an example of how you can sometimes let chord tones function as melody notes. All

EXAMPLE 1

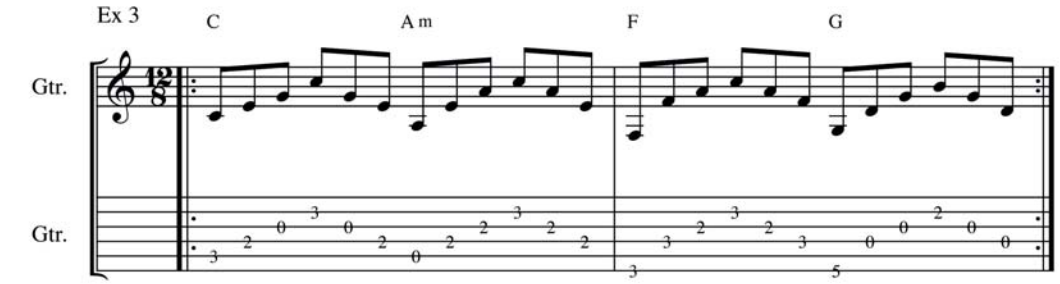


NEW
Elixir® HD Light Strings
a new voice to love – for longer
ELX-332-ADV-EN-FEB14
GORE, ELIXIR, NANOWEB, POLYWEB, GREAT TONE · LONG LIFE, "e" icon, and other designs are trademarks of W. L. Gore & Associates. ©2013 W. L. Gore & Associates, Inc.

EXAMPLE 2

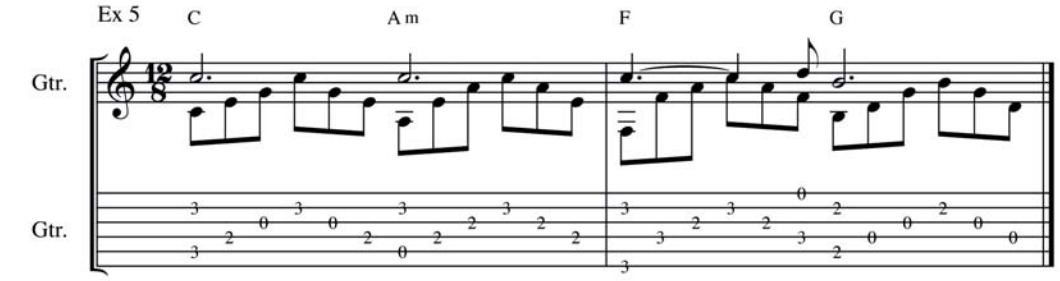


EXAMPLE 3



EXAMPLE 4

EXAMPLE 5



you have to do here is to try to make sure that the melody note stands out from the arpeggiated accompaniment by giving it a little more pressure with the right hand plucking finger. In the second bar I've sneaked in a rogue melody note from the scale just to show you where we're headed with all of this. It might take a couple of passes to get it in there fluently and make it sound completely natural, but practice will come up with the goods if you find it awkward at first.

In **example 6**, I've taken things a little further. To begin with the accompaniment is broken up a little and the melody is a bit more adventurous as well. But nothing has changed; the chords have remained the same and the melody notes are still drawn form the C scale.

In **example 7**, I've changed the time signature from rock'n'roll ballad-friendly 12/8 to the slightly more familiar 4/4. Now, instead of arpeggios all the way underneath the melody, I've included some static abbreviated versions of the chords on the first two beats of each bar.

The fact is that you can take noodling where you want to. Change the time signature, break the chords up a little, play slowly, speed things up – the choice is yours. But if you work a little at exercises like this and find out for yourself what works and what doesn't, you will find that you'll begin to develop a heightened awareness of melody and, furthermore, playing melody and harmony at once begins to feel a lot easier. The key is to experiment and not to worry if it all sounds a little fumble-fingered to begin with. We all started that way!

David Mead

DOWNLOAD

ONLINE EXTRA

DOWNLOAD THE FULL TRANSCRIPTION AND EXAMPLES FROM:
WWW.ACOUSTICMAGAZINE.COM

- Bolder, stronger high end
- Fuller, warmer low end
- Balanced voice across all strings
- Ideal for narrow bodied guitars
- Comfortable, balanced hand feel
- .013, .017, .025, .032, .042, .053

Elixir® strings

Learn more:
www.elixirstrings.co.uk/hdlight

CHRIS WOODS
Contemporary Acoustic Groove Player

Touring instrumental guitarist, recording as 'Chris Woods Groove', described as 'changing the perceived boundaries of the acoustic guitar'. Author of the acclaimed book and DVD package *Percussive Acoustic Guitar* from Hall Leonard.
www.chriswoodsgroove.co.uk

APP EXTRA
PRESS **PLAY**
FOR ADDITIONAL CONTENT

TECHNIQUES SKILL LEVEL: SUITABLE FOR ALL

SLAP FUNK

DEVELOPING YOUR RIGHT-HAND TECHNIQUE

This month, I'm revisiting the land of slap guitar. Why? Well, quite simply, funk is good for the soul – and your guitar playing, too. Working on your slap technique will help your right hand technique develop, so climb aboard and let's get slappin' this month's examples.

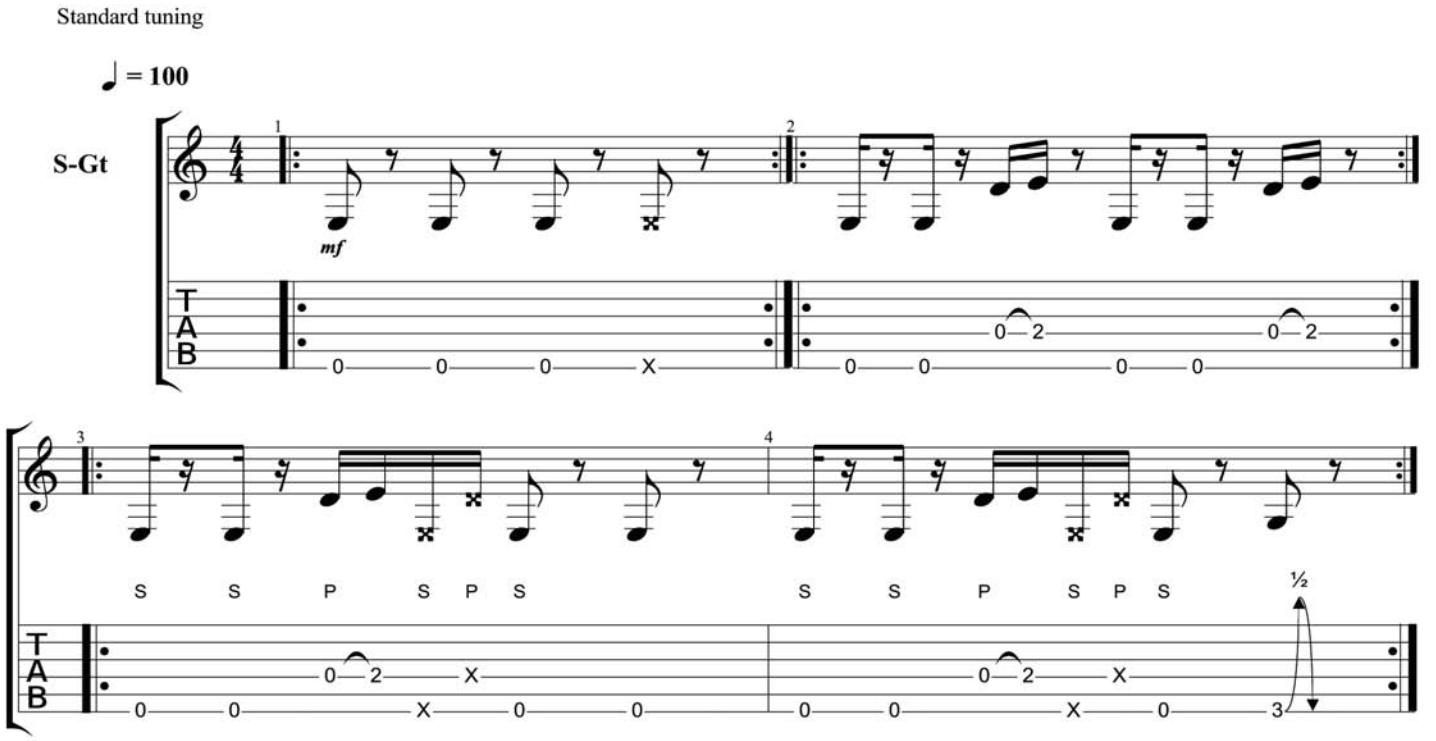
There's a tuition video in the digital edition to accompany the tablature, so make use of it as you work through this piece.

Before you start, here's an important point to consider: Being relaxed when you play guitar is, in my opinion, the single most important thing to be aware of when playing. Whatever level you are at, your muscles simply will not function as well when tense, and this technique is a great way to practice that. The three examples here will take you step by step and whether you are an advanced player or new to the world of these techniques, it's worth looking at the basics first and being sure to focus your energy into relaxing – this will help the movements become more fluid.

EXAMPLE 1

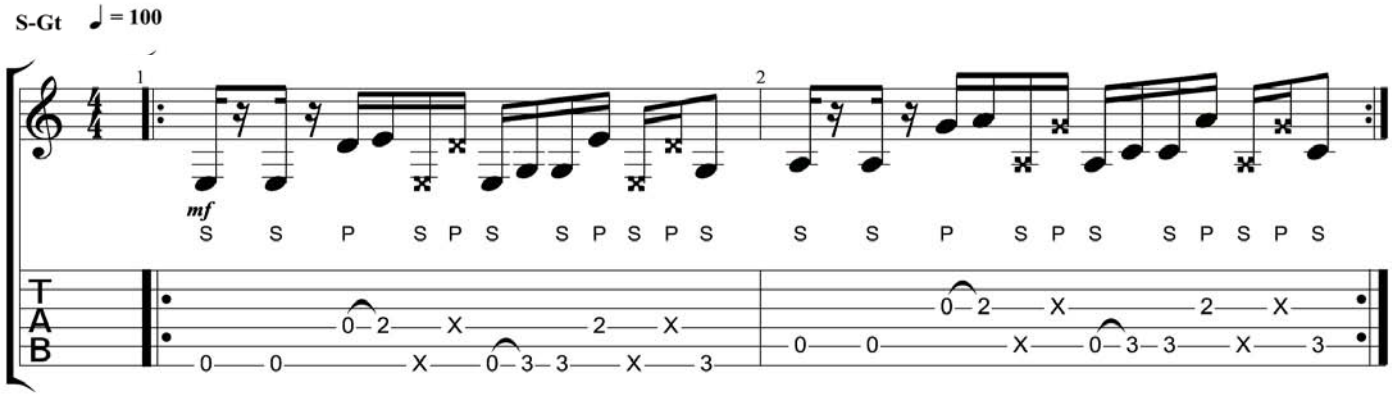
The first bar is where you need to master you slap. Turn your wrist (staying relaxed) and hit the low E string with the side of your thumb. Notice how the left hand kills the strings to help create a more syncopated sound. When you come to the second bar, you'll notice the introduction of the "pop"; create this sound by hooking

EXAMPLE 1

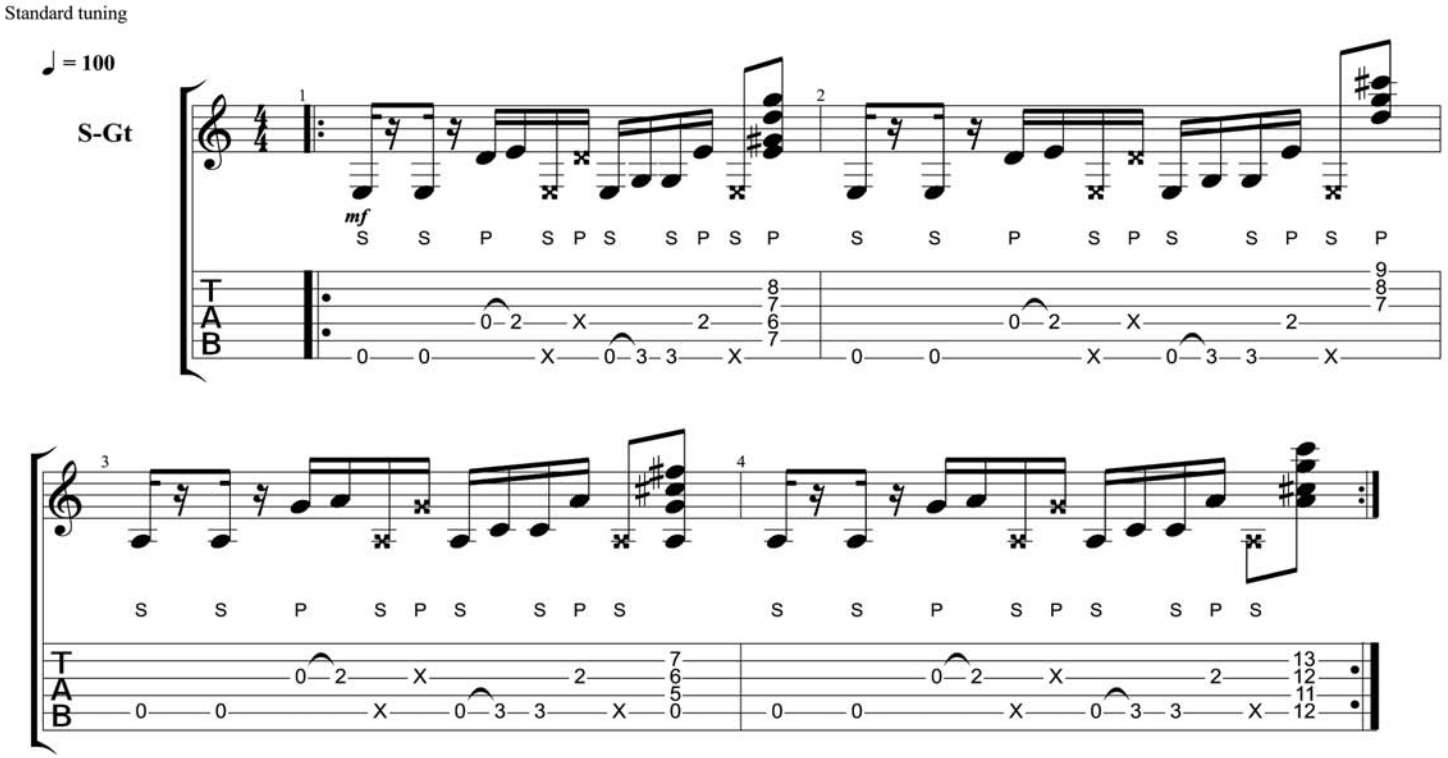


NEW
Elixir® HD Light Strings
a new voice to love – for longer
ELX-332-ADV-EN-FEB14
GORE, ELIXIR, NANOWEB, POLYWEB, GREAT TONE · LONG LIFE, "e" icon, and other designs are trademarks of W. L. Gore & Associates. ©2013 W. L. Gore & Associates, Inc.

EXAMPLE 2



EXAMPLE 3



your finger under the string and "popping" or "pulling" on the string. In the later bars you'll notice I've added a few muted slaps and pops.

EXAMPLE 2

The crucial thing going on here is the muted slaps and pops are becoming more frequent; meanwhile, I've added a hammer-on to one of the slaps. Ultimately, things are sounding busier – just take it slowly. You'll notice we have now also added the same riff on the A string – try using your thumb to help mute the E string.

EXAMPLE 3

The riff remains the same, except for the introduction of some other chords. After the last muted slap you need to find your way up the neck to find tasty jazz chord there. Undoubtedly this will take practice, but if relaxation has been in your mind throughout you will get there in no time.

Chris Woods

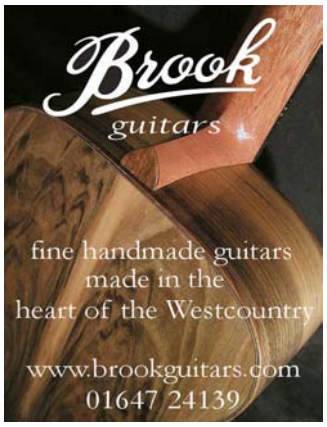
- Bolder, stronger high end
- Fuller, warmer low end
- Balanced voice across all strings
- Ideal for narrow bodied guitars
- Comfortable, balanced hand feel
- .013, .017, .025, .032, .042, .053

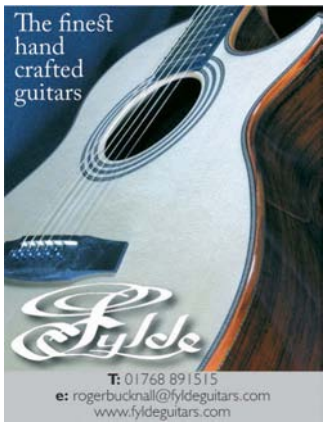
Elixir® strings

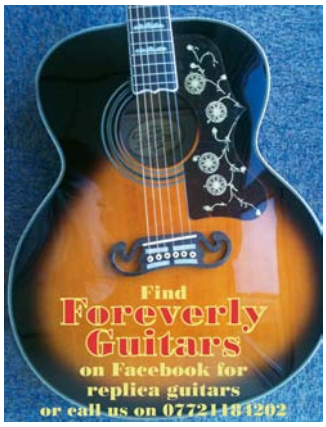
Learn more:
www.elixirstrings.co.uk/hdlight

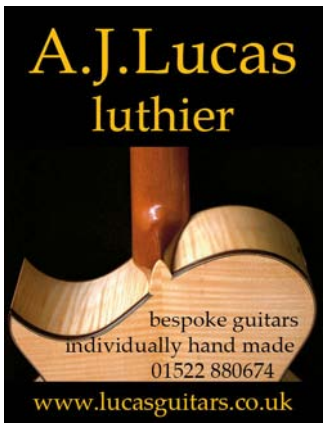
Classifieds

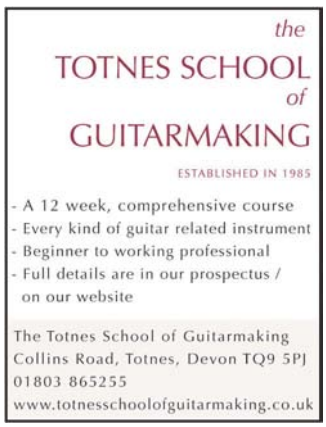
To advertise here simply call 01926 339808
or email: florencetw@blazepublishing.co.uk











TO ADVERTISE HERE

Please call Flo on 01926 339808

Reader ads now online at www.acousticmagazine.com

Reader ads now online at www.acousticmagazine.com

Advertisers' Index

440 Distribution 35
Allianz 89
Auden Guitars 21
Avalon Guitars 11
D'Addario 55
Dave Mann Music 34
Deering 91
Elixir Strings 29
EMD International Limited 51
Ewan Mc Lennan 83
Ferris Music 81
Forsyths 83
Frailers 65
G7th 13
Gear 4 Music 72
GEWA Music 59
Glasswerks 87
Gremlin Music 81
Headstock Distribution Ltd 88
Ivor Mairants Musicentre 25
John Hornby Skewes & Co Ltd 25
Logjam Music 87
Lowden Guitars 2
Mike Dawes 89
Musicians Union 87
National Resophonic 3
Peavey Electronics Ltd 73
Promenade Music 50
Replay Acoustics 81
Roland UK 14-15
Rotosound 65
Stentor Music Co. Ltd 34
Strings & Things 108
Sutherland Trading Co Ltd 68
The Music Room 12
The North American Guitar ..... 77 + 107
Westside Distribution 4

LEGENDS

John Denver

WORDS: TERI SACCONE

Singer-songwriter John Denver is often overlooked for his musical contributions, likely due to his wholesome image and mega-commercial mainstream popularity. But Denver's environmentally-themed country-folk had an impact during the 70s that today's Americana artists can only dream of. Back in his heyday, radio was king and music was the fabric of people's lives. Denver's music conveyed an emotional connection to nature that is life affirming, outstandingly melodic, and accessible. His sweeping melodies and lyrics have stood the test of time and are redolent of an American era of simple pleasures, celebrating nature, and life itself.

Denver was born Henry John Deutschendorf in Roswell, New Mexico, on December 31, 1943. Raised by a US Air Force father, he grew up in a peripatetic family in various places throughout south western USA. As a teenager when rock music was on the rise, his grandmother gave him a Gibson acoustic guitar, and while attending Texas Tech University, he began performing in local clubs. He adopted the stage surname Denver due his love of the Rocky Mountain region.

Denver dropped out of university in 1964 to relocate to Los Angeles and break into the music scene. Once there, he joined the Chad Mitchell Trio; popular on the hootenanny circuit of the early 60s, but in the decline of their career when John joined them. However, Denver helped to revive the group's fortunes on the strength of his songwriting skills.

Eventually, Denver exited the group in 1969 to pursue a solo career. That same year he recorded his debut LP, *Rhymes and Reasons* and although this wasn't a breakthrough, it boasted one of his best-

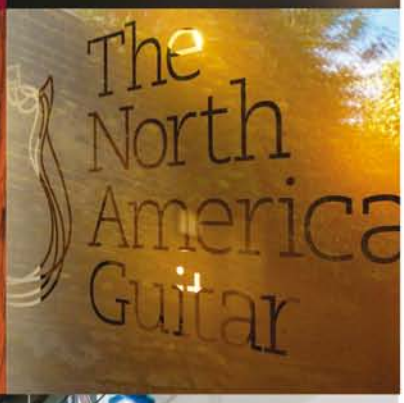
loved compositions 'Leaving On A Jet Plane' – an international sensation for folk trio Peter, Paul & Mary. The success of that song gave Denver a higher profile in the music industry. Neither of Denver's next two follow-up albums launched him as a solo performer, but with 1971's *Poems, Prayers & Promises*, he achieved superstardom, thanks to the million-selling hits 'Take Me Home, Country Roads' and 'Sunshine on My Shoulders'. In the years to follow, Denver also had major hits with 'Annie's Song' and 'Back Home Again', and by 1974, he was among the top three of America's best-selling performers. Albums like 1975's *An Evening With John Denver* and *Windsong* were internationally successful, and he continued to score huge hits with 'Rocky Mountain High', 'Thank God I'm a Country Boy' and 'I'm Sorry'. Additionally, his 1974 best-of collection sold over 10 million copies worldwide, and remained on the charts for over two years.

Denver played an 18-string acoustic guitar which at that time, in the US, was extraordinarily rare. This instrument was most likely a Gibson B-45 12-string model converted into an 18 String; reportedly in the possession of singer-songwriter Randy Sparks.

At the peak of his success, Denver was seemingly ubiquitous – on TV, the radio and even in movies. In the mid-70s, the governor of Colorado proclaimed him the state's poet laureate, due to his lyrical contributions. Eventually, he transitioned into film, co-starring with George Burns in the comedy *Oh, God*.

During this time, however, Denver dramatically curtailed his recording output, and after *1977's I Want to Live*, issued no new material until 1980's *Autograph*. The following year, he performed with opera star Placido Domingo, but as the decade progressed, Denver's popularity trailed off as he turned his focus toward charitable endeavours, founding the World Hunger Project. Other philanthropic pursuits focussed primarily on ecological concerns and space exploration. He also toured Russia and China, and in 1987 performed in Chernobyl in the aftermath of their nuclear disaster. While maintaining a solid cult following, by the 1990s Denver had largely faded from view although he still released some music. In 1994, Denver published his autobiography, *Take Me Home*.

A long-time aviation enthusiast who regularly flew his own planes, Denver crashed his personal aircraft on October 12, 1997, killing him instantly. Denver was just 53 years old. ■



The North American Guitar

The UK Home of the Finest Custom Guitars

Come and visit our beautiful London showroom and experience the very best of modern guitar lutherie.

Relax in our quiet surroundings and enjoy a personal one to one service to help choose your perfect instrument.

Call now to arrange an appointment on 0207 835 5597 or email hello@thenorthamericanguitar.com.

The North American Guitar
15 Coda Centre
189 Munster Road
London, SW6 6AW

The UK home of the finest custom guitars including:
Carter | Poulsen / Fine Resophonic / Froggy Bottom / Greenfield / Kostal / Lame Horse
Scott Walker – and a selection of fine pre-owned guitars.

*by appointment only. Please contact hello@thenorthamericanguitar.com or phone 0207 835 5597
web thenorthamericanguitar.com

INNOVATION
www.innovationstrings.co.uk
www.innovationstrings.com
INNOVATION
www.innovationstrings.com
Double Bass Strings
'Innovation strings, the unique combination of responsiveness, clarity and rich sweet tone that I want'
Sam Burgess, Ronnie Scotts (London)